DISCOURSES

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS:

EGROUNALLE AND RIGHT REVERS

ST THE LATE

Reverend EDWARD STONE, A. M.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF WADHAM-COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Revised for the PRESS by the AUTHOR,

AND PUBLISHED BY HIS SON LABORDS OF T

The Reverend EDWARD STONE, A. M.

CHAPLAIN TO THE RT. HON. LORD VISCOUNT HAMPDEN,

AND, RECTOR OF HARTWELL, AND HORSENDON, BUCKS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

OXFORD.

Printed for J. and J. FLETCHER, in the Turle; and fold by Messes.

RIVINGTON, in St. Paul's Church Yard, London.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

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M. DCC, LXXXIV.

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

RICHARD,

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

MY LORD,

YOUR Patronage of the following Discourses, is too eminent a Mark of Distinction to the Memory of my Father, to admit of my silence, under the warm Sentiment of Gratitude which it inspires:—But, I shall not distress your Lordship with a Panegyric, as some Characters, my Lord, rich with their own intrinsick Lustre, suffer no ressected Light to heighten their Splendor.

I therefore, only beg Leave, to profess myself, with the highest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

And most devoted humble Servant,

EDWARD STONE.

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RICHARD

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

My Loge.

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Q Lord! How manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all: the Earth is full of the Riches!

HERE are very few Persons who professedly deny the Being of a God; but there are many who are unsteady in their Belief of Him, or have confused Notions of his Superintendency and Administration of the Universe: Natural Occurrences are often mistaken for supernatural Interpositions; but the Providence of God is more frequently excluded from the ordinary Course of Things and the established Order of the World: Hence it comes to pass, that Men are sometimes vainly elated with the Presumption of Divine Favours, or as soolishly dejected

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from the Apprehension of Divine Judgments, and at another Time are entirely void of all Thoughts of the Deity, and as freely censure His Works, as if they had been those of a Fellow-Creature: As these erroneous Opinions have a very extensive Influence on the Minds of Men, and are attended with various and fatal Consequences in their moral Conduct, it is evidently of the utmost Importance to have our Faith in God sounded upon a clear and rational Conception of His Being and Attributes.

And as this Exclamation of the Pfalmile feems to flow from a thorough Contemplation, and ample Conviction of the Divine Perfections, I will endeavour to raise in you a just Sense of these Perfections; for which End, I purpose to comment upon and illustrate the

Truths contained in this Sentence;

And then to shew you what practical Doctrines are to be inferred, and what Uses made from it.

O Lord! How manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom bast Thou made them all: the Earth is full of thy Riches.

The Proofs of a Deity here referred to, are called Arguments a Posteriori, because they are Inductions of Causes from their Effects; of a Creator from the Things created; of a Governous

versiour and Superintendent from the Prefervation, Harmony, and Beauty of the Subjects governed and superintended; Powers likewise and Qualities are attributed to the Artificer from the Manifestation of them in his Workthan the Manues State of the second every Sequent

The Attributes directly alluded to, or expressly mentioned, are the Almighty Power, the unerring Wildom, and the unlimited Good falmoning its Branch, Leaf, Flowestool To size

His Almighty Power is implied in the first Part: Struck with the amazing Variety of Objects, continually presenting themselves to all his Senses from this stupendous Fabrick of the Universe, the Pfalmift expressed his Admiration in Raptures, O Lord! How may nifold are thy Works ! Which ever Way he looked, they were from all Points crowding in upon him; if he opened the Ground and explored its hidden Contents, he found that the Earth was a Cabinet replete with His cucious Works; and in its Bowels were Repertories of Minerals and Fossils of various Kinds, infinitely furpaffing his Attention, his Memory, his langination was land to the wast pulping

If he furveyed the Surface of this terrestrial Globe, he saw it covered with His Wonders; where ever he trod they were fpringing up under his Feen: The Garden, Field, A 2 and

and Pasture; the Mountain, Plain, and Valley poured forth in Abundance their Fruit, Herb, Corn, and Tree: All the Vegetable Tribe from the humble Moss to the proud Cedar, were the Works of the Sovereign Author of Nature: He formed every Seed, and commissioned it to take Root downwards, and to shoot its Stem upwards; He endowed each Species of Plants with the plastick Power of fashioning its Branch, Leaf, Flower, and Fruit; in a Manner peculiar to itself, and infinite in its Kind.

And as they drew their Nourishment from the Earth, so they themselves were Food or Materials for necessary Uses to a superiour Order of Creatures; by which Gradation the Pfalmist ascended to a much wider Field for Contemplation, and was furnished with more topious Subjects of Admiration: He beheld the vital Principle diversified in as many Forms as Matter could admit of; and all Places pregnant with Proofs of the Parent of the World, and the everlasting Source of Life.

Who can muster the Armies of the Almighty? or call by their Names, the Infantry that run, leap, walk, and crawl upon the Surface of the Ground?

How full are the Regions of the Air with his winged Hoft? Is not the Atmosphere fan-

ned

ned with unnumbered Plumes, and the Sky clouded with the prodigious Flights of the feathered Kind? a Siwall at the board ods

With what Shoals of Inhabitants doth the watry Element abound? Who can recount the Wonders of the Deep? whose Streams swarm with Fry innumerable of the finny Race; whose Sides are lined, and whose Bottom is overspread with an Infinity of Animals of the testaceous Order.

Thus all these Elements, Earth, Air, and Water are peopled with His Creatures, which appear to our short and naked Sight as the Stars in Heaven, or the Sands on the Sea-Shore for Multitude. their planetery Sylvens, is

But how is our Prospect enlarged and our Admiration increased, when we view with Artificial Eyes, or magnifying Glasses any Portion of his Works? New Worlds are disclosed to us! every Drop of Water swells into an Ocean for Fishes of various Kinds to take their Pastime therein; and many Particles of Earth appear to be Globes well stocked with Animals both great and fmall! geno calcionen begrulas

And as the more minute, fo the more distant Objects are brought within the Reach of our Sight; we discover with Telescopick Eyes new primary and fecondary Planets in our folar System, and plainly distinguish them for

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opaque Bodies, like our Earth, borrowing their Heat and Light from the Sun: the Number of the fixed Stars is likewise multiplied upon us beyond all Conception, which to Appearance,

have Heat and Light of their own.

And as our external Senses carry us thus far, our internal Senses will carry us much farther, and with the Eye of Reason we shall see the Planets bearing a nearer Resemblance to our Earth, in being habitable Orbs, and abounding with no less stupendous Instances of Almighty Power; and through the Means of this intellectual Vision, we plainly perceive, that the fixed Stars are Suns, (like our Sun) illuminating their planetary Systems.

And as Reason bids us suppose opaque Bodies waiting upon these Suns, so it authorizes us to suppose Suns beyond Suns to us invisible; since Space is indefinite, it would be letting Bounds to Omnipotency not to carry on the Hypothefis, and prefume that, Space, (which is infinitely more distant, and both greater and less, than our most improved Sight can reach, or enlarged Capacities comprehend,) doth not lie waste; but that every Part of it is completely furnished with the Works of an Almighty Sight; we different with Pelaliconia Being.

And after all, when we have given the utmost Stretch to our Imagination, and indulged

it in the fullest Range of boundless Space, it will fall infinitely short of its Subject, and only serve to inspire us with Astonishment at this awful Attribute of the Delty, and make us with Extafy exclaim, How manifold are thy Works! How great is thy Power! O Lord.

The next Attribute is the Wildom of God; in Wisdom bast Thou made them all: But as this is not fo properly a fingle Attribute as the Comprehension of all natural and moral Perfections, it cannot well be confidered abstractedly from the Divine Goodness; I shall therefore be obliged to treat of them unitedly, and include under this Topick the Illustration of the last Paragraph, The Earth is full of thy Riches.

We are much better Judges of superlative Power, than of superlative Wisdom in the Works of the Creation: the Existence of every Object is an apparent Effect of Power far furpassing our own; and though we cannot determine the Quantity of that Excess; yet the Multiplicity of Ways in which we fee it exemplified, is a convincing Proof of its infittite Magnitude.

But though we see that Things exist; yet we feldom fee why they exist. There are innumerable Objects in the Creation, of which we can form no Kind of Judgment; nor in the

the least Degree comprehend the Uses, Means, or Ends, for, or by which they were made: They are well known to the Senses, but entire

Strangers to the Understanding ... A litter with

Again, There are some Things which we view as through a Glass darkly; we see but Parts of them, and even those not distinctly; we can perceive in general that they are the Effects of infinite Skill and Contrivance; some of their Uses and Ends likewise may occur to us and shew inestable Sapience and Benignity; but the Ways or Means by which these Effects are produced, are impenetrable Secrets to us.

Lastly, There are some sew Things which are nearly level to our Capacities, and though we may not be persectly adequate, yet we are sufficiently competent Judges of their Uses; Means, and Ends; among these therefore it will be most proper to look for the Manisestation of superlative Wisdom and Goodness; as they are the natural, plain and positive Proofs to us of the Being and Providence of God; and the chief angular Stones, on which we must build our Faith; and consequently are the best Topicks for illustrating the remaining Part of my Subject, in Wisdom bast Thou made them all: the Earth is full of thy Riches.

Now the Things that chiefly engage our Attention; we are mostly conversant with

or which are nearly related to us, or constitute even a Part of ourselves, are the proper Subjects of our Judgment: let us then fix our Enquiry, and begin with contemplating the Divine Wifdom and Goodness as they relate to ourselves, and to the general Conditions and Circumstances of Human Nature:

First then, it is evident, that we are made social Beings, and in an eminent Degree prepared for such a State: The Sovereign Creator of the World raised our first Parent from the Dust of the Earth, and could as easily have raised all his Posterity in the same Manner; but through his all-directing Providence he hath ordered them to derive their Being and to issue from one another; that from the several intimate Relations and Connections resulting from this Consanguinity and Descent, they may be endeared to one another, and all Mankind composing one Family live together in Love and Amity.

Hence we are no sooner come into the World, than we are provided with Friends who were waiting to receive us, and to welcome us upon our Arrival; who have the most cordial Affection for us; and without any previous Favour or suture Prospect from us, tender our Sasety as their own; who spare no Pains, and seel no Pleasure, but to help us in our most

most helples State: the Infant is prepared for the Breaft, and the Breaft for the Infant; and while one is craving for the Milk, the Mother is as impatient till the hath difburthened herfelf of it: Who cannot see the Hand of Providence in these Preparations and Provisions? And seeing, cannot but adore His Goodness? What could have been done more for us than is done? Is not God, strictly speaking, our Father? And are not all others only his Deputies, or Foster-Fathers, whom He hath appointed, qualified, and indeed obliged to do every Thing that is necessary or proper for us? It is natural for Parents to love their Children, that is, the God of Nature, the Parent of Parents hath infused it into their Heart, and made it an effential Principle in their Constitution, so that they cannot avoid loving them: This strong Affection may in some degree be moderated, and perhaps through the violent Transports of some over grown Paffion suppressed for a Season, but it cannot be totally extinguished or deftroyed.

When we come forth from the Hands of our Parents, we are only removed from a greater to a less dependant State; no one is sofficient for himself; neither is any one ever lest to himself alone; we are encircled with a Multitude of Friends; all our Fellow Creatures are our Brethren; Brethren not only in Consanguinity, but Affection;

Affection; the Adl-gracious Parent of the World hath inspired their Minds with Benevolence, and breathed into them the Breath of Love: What an inexhaustible Source of Goodness then must He be, from whom the streams of Friendship are continually flowing into every Man's Breast! Must not He be Love itself, who hath instituted such infinite Charities; and made natural Inclination, Duty, and Interest, concur in every Human Being, to promote his Neighbour's Welfare?

And as our most munificent Benefactor hath thus amply provided us with Friends in every Part of this social State; so hath He with the like superintending Care supplied us with all the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life: Observe with what Generosity and Occonomy they are disposed of, and at what a proper Distance they are placed from us; had they been set farther off, they would have cost us too much Pains to have gathered them; had they been brought nearer, they would have been too easily acquired and too lightly esteemed.

Food, Habitation, and Raiment are not finished to our Hands, but the Substance of them is given us in the rude State, and we are impowered to work upon and complete it for our Use.

Thus our Daily Bread is reached out to us; every Thing is done for us which we cannot execute ourselves: Soil and Seed are prepared,

pared, and commissioned to produce Corn sufficient for our Sustenance; but it is our Part to till the Ground, sow the Seed, reap the Fruit, and do whatever is necessary, for converting it into Bread.

After the same Manner we are provided with the other Necessaries of Life; the rough Materials, such as Timber, Stone, and Earth, are found for our Dwelling; Silk, Wool, Flax, Hemp, and Cotton, for our Apparel; and it is incumbent upon us to find Workmanship.

All these Things could at once have been brought to Perfection; there could have been a, Table covered with all Kinds of Provision, and daily fet before us: Houses built, finished, and furnished for us; Raiment wrought and adapted to the Size and Structure of our Bodies; neither would this require any greater Expence of Power than the present Arrangement of Things; it would be as easy (if easy and difficult were Terms applicable to an omnipotent Being) to do this, as what hath been done, and endow us with Abilities to do the Reft: In either Case there would be the same Exertion of Power, and no other Difference than in applying different Means for the Attainment of the same End; and the Reason why the Whole was not done for Man. feems to be, that though it would imply the pared fame

fame Power, yet display less Skill and Contrivance in the Disposition of these Things, and indicate less Goodness to Man; as by affigning a Part to him, and making him an Affistant to his Creator, and accessary to his own well-being, the Benefaction is enlarged; the same Things are made the Necessaries of Life and the subject Matter of his Industry, and become moral as well as natural Goods; he is admitted to the Honour of carrying on the Designs of Providence; is taught to value these Gifts from the Pains he is obliged to take in procuring them; and Friendship to himself is made Obedience and Gratitude to his Benefactor. But farther,

As the Hand of Providence is thus extremely visible, in reaching out to us these Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life; so it is no less confpicuous in supplying our Wants in other Respects, and accommodating us with Attendants or Servants suitable to our Station and Preeminence in Life.

Man is the Head of the visible Creation, and as such, it hath been afferted that all Things were made for his Sake and for his Use; but, however that may be, nothing can be more evident than that some Creatures are in an especial Manner formed for his Service, and designedly appointed to wait upon him:

- Do not forme of them feed themselves that they may collect Food for him? Do not they diffend their Udders more for him than for their own Young, as if they had been nearer related to him, and had his Welfare more at Heart than theirs & And from his various Application of this milky Diet, and the Benefit he receives from it doth it not feem to be contrived more for his Use than their own?

Is not another Species of Animals clothed for his Sake? Do they not cheerfully part with their Covering, readily go naked and expose themselves to the Inclemency of the Seasons to forcen him from it, as if they carried his Coat and not their own, and ferved themselves in As the lake to I frowidence is the mid gained

Do not both these faithful and friendly Tribes eat, drink, and live more upon his Account than their own? Do they not die for him too, being ever ready to funrender their Lives at his Pleasure? And as their whole Time when living was devoted to his Service, fo every Part of their Body when dead is peculiarly appropriated to his Ufe. and district it and see

Again, is there not another Species of Animals destined to labour in his Service? Are not their Bodies adapted to this very Purpose? Their Limbs fashioned, and their Strength proportioned to it? Are not their Minds likewife CCT

wife suited to their Office? As they are most willing and ready by Day or by Night to chey his Summons, and at a Moment's Warning to convey him, or whatever Burden he is pleased to load them with, where-ever he commands: They have no Will, but their Lord's and Master's; and in the most tractable and implicit Manner follow his Guidance; patiently submitting to every Kind of Treatment, and gratefully accepting any Sort of Food from him.

The like Observations might be made upon several other Creatures that attend upon us; and upon every other Circumstance of our Being; but these I hope are sufficient with respect to ourselves.

Upon the Whole give me Leave to alk, from whence or from whom came this admirable Provision and Disposition of Things around us a who drew and executed this Plan? If the Philosopher who was cast upon an unknown Island, from discovering some Geometrical Diagrams in the Sand of the Sea Shore, could from the Joy of his Heart exclaim, "Vestigia Hominis video," how much more abundant Reason have we to cry out from Ecstasy of Joy, that we see the Footsteps of God, when we bear such strong Traces of Wisdom and Goodness upon ourselves, as could not come from any Being less than infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness? Do

ion

not we plainly see how providentially we were taken care of, when we were unable to take care of ourselves? Who is so blind as not to perceive with what admirable Occonomy we are furnished with all the Apparatus of Life? What can be more evident than that all the aforementioned Animals were made for Man, and for him alone? Do they not afford him more Uses, and contracted into less Room than he could have contrived for himself? Or can he conceive how these or any other Creatures may be rendered more beneficial to him than they are? What deeper Prints could there have been of an omnipotent and omniscient Being, than what we have before us?

And if any Judgment can be formed from Experience; any Argument drawn from the plainest Matters of Fact; or any Induction of a Cause made from the Effect, we may from the Fulness of Demonstration burst forth in Raptures, "Great is the Lord, Great is his "Power, and His Wisdom is infinite."

Besides these glaring Manisestations of transcendent Knowledge and Goodness in Things, which immediately concern or affect ourselves; there are several others in Things, which are near to us; from these I will select some very remarkable and striking Instances, which constants

constantly folicit our Attention, and are the common Topicks of our Conversation.

And fince the Competency of our Judgment is founded upon the Frequency and Obviousness of these Instances, give me leave to premise, that it ill becomes an intelligent Being, one, who values and ranks himfelf before all other Creatures for his Understanding, to permit his Reason, the Eye of his Mind, to be thut against the clearest Rays of Light; or blinded with the brightest Splendor of Demonstration; or to suffer the Frequency and Obviousness of these Instances to detract from the Authority which they give.

The Instances I mean, are the astonishing Knowledge and Powers, with their Effects, of Birds and feathered Fowl of every Kind, for the Continuance of their Species in the breeding and nurturing of their Young : Without any Premonition, Reflection, or Experience, they are conscious of the approaching Season for their Breeding; and from an Affurance which nothing but Certainty can give, make all due Preparation for it; with a Knowledge infinitely furpaffing all acquired Attainments, choose a convenient Place for their Nursery; and without any formal Defign or laboured Plan begin to lay the Outworks of their Edifice, and proceed to carry it on with inimitable Skill and indefatigable Industry. they

And as if they had been thoroughly acquainted with the Strength of their Materials, and the Time for which they should want them, they adapt one to the other, and quickly finish a most complete Receptacle for their Eggs, which having served their Purpose soon-falls to Pieces.

All Birds of the same Species, without any previous Consultation or Agreement, strictly observe the same Rules of Architecture; collect the same Materials; frame them exactly in the same Manner; unite them with the same Cement; apply without any Model, the same Dimensions or Proportions; and erect without the least sensible Difference, the same temporary Mansion or Cradle.

It is likewise well worthy of our Observation, that every different Species of the seathered Kind have a different Form and Manner of building peculiar to itself.

Should it be asked, why all Nests of the same Kind are precisely similar, and all of different Kinds, dissimilar? The Answer is obvious; because all Individuals of the same Species are exactly of the same Texture and Size, and are (as it were,) the same Bird; and all of different Species are of a different Make: And therefore if they were not universally similar in the same, and diffimilar in different Kinds, they

they would not be all equally fitted to their respective Purposes, but admit Degrees of Comparison; some would be better, and fome worse than others; and consequently many, imperfect: But as they are at present, all may be perfect in their feveral Kinds; and it is a strong presumptive Proof that they are all perfect, from their being exquifitely formed and excellently adapted to the Figure and Number of the Inhabitants for whom they were made; being open, or roofed, plaistered, stuccoed, hung, or lined, with fuch Stuffs as are most proper for retaining that genial Heat necessary for quickening their Eggs and cherishing their Young: and what confirms the Whole, and brings it to a Demonstration is, that they all equally answer the respective Ends for which they were constructed.

When these Master Architects have finished their Houses and furnished them with Eggs, they shew themselves Adepts in another Art; and conscious, as it were, of their Contents, the Necessity of Heat, and the proper Degrees of it for Growth, they communicate their own natural Warmth; and frequently turn the Eggs; that every Part may equally partake of it; and as the greater Heat is required, the closer is their Sitting, by which Means the Fætus gradually increases, till at B 2 length

length it becomes too big for its Manfion, and burfts its Enclosure.

Then as other Offices enfue, these Animals are inspired with proper Qualifications to discharge them; the Cries of their Young awaken an ardent Affection, by which they are impelled to nurse them with extreme Tenderness; and emboldened contrary to their natural Temper to step in between them and Danger, and to expose themselves to the latter for their Protection: We see likewise these Parents endowed with an intuitive Knowledge of the Wants of their Family, and with a Resolution to persevere with unwearied Diligence in procuring Food in Proportion to the Increase of it; and they had sooner be emaciated themselves with Want, than fuffer any of their little Ones to pine with Hunger: But as these encrease in Strength and less need the Affiltance of their Parents, this Affection as gradually decreases, and at length dies away together with the Wants and Dependancies upon it.

Now these Facts are indisputable; we see all the Offices duly performed; they are so common that they cannot but be seen; and perhaps if they were not so common, they would attract greater Attention: What passes every Day before our Eyes is so samiliar, that it seems to come of Course: We are diverted

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by the Multiplielty of the Effects from the Confideration of their Caule; and what should increase our Wonder by a strange Infatuation is apt to diminish it: The Wonder then is, how these Offices are performed: How came these Animals, who are so much inferior to the Human Race, endowed with a Knowledge fo far superiour to them? Or, how came they so unequal to themselves, as to be sublimely Wife in some Respects, nay, in every Respect where it is necessary, and as profoundly Ignorant in all other? This Wildom could not have been acquired by Precept, Example, or Practice; it would then have come gradually; there would have been Teaching and Learning, Masters and Scholars; forme have excelled others, and even themselves at different Times: but this is not the Case; whatever is done, is done perfectly at the first Essay, as well as at the last? All of them, both old and young, are Masters in their Arts; and all their Works are equally complete, at whatever diftant Places or Times they are wrought: How shall we account for this universal Agreement? Shall we say that this Knowledge is natural to them, or born with them? But the Question still returns, what is Natural? Or, if this Knowledge be an Inheritance by Birth, whole Heirs are they? Who fettled it upon them? B 3

Or, from whom did it descend? For neither they nor their Inheritance could come of themselves, but if it be entailed upon them, there must be an Entailer, and if there be a Receiver, there must be a Giver: And who can this Entailer or Giver be, but their Creator, the Great God of Nature; who, when He breathed into them the Breath of Life, inspired them with this Knowledge: And as no one can give what he hath not, He who communicated it to them, must have had it originally in Himself; it must have been a Portion of His infinite Wisdom, or a Stream issuing

from the eternal Source of Truth,

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Again, fince this Inspiration, Instinct, or by whatever other Name it be diftinguished, doth not proceed from Experience, Reflection, or the Use of any rational Faculties in Birds; but is immediate, universal, permanent, and perfect; it is not properly their own: and as these Animals have no Kind of Deliberation, or Choice, but are obliged to act as they are directed by this Instinct, they are strictly speaking only Means, or Instruments, in the Hands of the Deity, which he makes use of for the Preservation and Continuance of their Species; and confequently it is not properly they that know and do these Things, but their Principal, the supreme Author and Protector of the World, Who

Who is acting in and through them; He is the Prophet, the Architect, and the Parent: He foretels the future Season, suggests what will come to pass, and dictates the Preparation to be made for it; He chooses the Situation of their Edifice; points out the Materials, and directs the Arrangement of them: Through His Sovereign Influence they sit upon and hatch their Eggs, and do every necessary Office in tending, feeding, and rearing their Young.

Hence it is evident that God himself condescends to confine His Omniscience to, and exert it through the diminutive Powers of these Animals for accomplishing these Works; for the their intellectual Faculties are enlarged, their corporeal Powers remain the same; and therefore we actually see what may be done with the Limbs and Strength of Birds, under the Direction of infinite Wisdom.

This perhaps may be fetting the Subject in a new Light, nevertheless, it is no unnatural Representation of it, nor any ways derogatory of the Attributes of the Deity:

The End is the Preservation of the Succession of Creatures in their several Species, which He hath thought sit to make; and the Means are Operations perfect in their Kinds, and completely adapted to the Accomplishment of this B 4 End:

End: Both which are altogether worthy of the Sovereign Creator and Superintendent of the World.

We have here likewise a clear and distinct Explication of the Word Instinct, which is generally used as a mysterious Term, implying something we know not what, and without any determinate Meaning affixed to it:

But to affert that God Himfelf is exerting His Omniscience through these Animals; that He is the Agent, and they mere Instruments in His Hands, or under His Direction, is speaking in an intelligible Manner, and exciting an exalted Idea of the Deity; Who appears from this Description to be incessantly displaying His Divine Providence through all Parts of His Creation, and continually subjecting His infinite Knowledge to the Powers of the meanest of His Creatures, where it is necessary for their Good and the Support of their Creation.

Before I close this Heatl, it may not be improper to obviate an Objection, which however inconsiderable, yet perhaps is the only one that hath, or can be raised against the latter Part of the Subject, and the Interpretation of the Word Instinct; The Objection is this,

Whatever an all-perfect Being doth, must be complete in every Respect: If then He Himself acts in Birds through the whole Process of their Breeding;

Breeding; and is the Contriver, Builder, and Finisher of their Nests; why are they frequently placed in such an open Situation, and so much exposed to publick View, that their whole End may be easily frustrated by the petulant Curiosity of Boys and Children, who are very affiduous in prying after them, and as impatient

in destroying them.

This Objection is best answered by opposing the Event to it: For, from thence it plainly appears, that the Delign of the Deity is to preferve the Species; which we fee by these Means effectually secured, and to render Life at all Times precarious to the Individual, which is a Condition of Mortality common to all their Fellow Creatures, and which would have been too much obstructed by an inscrutable Privacy of their Nests: And therefore this lax and feemingly artless Disposition of them is agreeable to the System of Divine Providence, and as much concerted by Infinite Wifdom, as any other Part of this whole Process; which is not so apparent as to endanger the Species, or fo fecret as to multiply the Individuals to Excess. nge a returned of the little course but after be

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Breeding; and is the Contriver, Builder, and Finisher of their Neits; why are they frequently placed in fuch an open Situation, and to much expected to public View, that their whole End may be callly to sated by the petulant Curio-tity of Boys and Children, who are very affidoors in pring after them, and as impatient in defroying thems boards at the

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DISCOURSE I.

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superlative Power, Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity die in son year than why wan ton

First, since Mankind are provided for as well as they could wish, and better than they could have accommodated themselves; since all the Necessaries and Appurtenances of Life are prepared for them, and all the Circumstances of their Being disposed in so prudent and benign a Manner, that they cannot but ascribe this Preparation and Disposition to an all-perfect Being: They ought to infer that these Attributes of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness

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are not confined to themselves, but are infinite in every Respect; and that every other Part of the Universe is planned by the same unerring Wisdom, and every other Creature equally taken Care of according to its Circumstances and Condition in Life; it would be infufferably vain in us to imagine that we engross the whole Favour of the Parent of the World, when all other Beings, as his Creatures, have the same Pretentions to it; and it would be as abfurd to limit His Power and Knowledge, by our own, or to suppose that they reach not beyond our Sight. I have already inferred, that His Wildom and Goodness must be infinite in Respect to us and the Creatures around us, because they far surpais our Comprehension in the manifest Exhibitions of them; and if they exceed it in some Parts, why may they not, nay, why must they not in all? Our internal Sight refembles our external; the Bye of the Mind is confined to a very feanty Sphere; it hath a diffinct View of forme few Objects placed at a proper Point within it; but those farther removed appear to be gradually diminished, till we lose Sight of the reft; we may therefore naturally suppose that the different Appearance of Objects at different Distances, is not owing to any Disproportion in the Objects themselves, but to our TAR F finite

finite Understanding and limited Station; if then all the Things, of which we have a full and diffinct View, appear without Exception to be perfect in their linds, we may fairly conclude that every other Thing, which we fee but dimly, or not at all, is likewife equally perfect; though the first bear no Proportion to the last, yet they are the only Things by which we can form our Judgments and they are sufficient to support that Judgment; it would be highly unjust to our Sovereign Creator, and also injurious to our own Understanding to suspect any Errors in the Things we do not fee, when none appear in what we do fee: whence it follows, that the same Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, which we perceive to be infinite in respect to ourselves, and the Things around us, must be also displayed through every Part of the Creation; all Things. must issue perfect from His Hands; there can be no Redundancy or Deficiency; all Places are filled, but none crowded with the Works of the Almighty; and Life is diverlified in as many Forms, as boundless Invention and Wisdom can contrive; and there are as many Species of Creatures, as the World can admit of without Confusion: or as Omnipotence create, and unlimited Goodness provide for; all which have their several Departments, and are regularly co-ordinate yllini

co-ordinate with or subordinate to one another, to that Uniformity and Variety, Beauty and Harmony run through the whole Scale of to be period in the Beings. Les dur Lata

And as every Species, fo likewife every Individual in each Species, is equally attended to; adapted to its Condition, and its Condition to it; and supplied with every Thing necessary or convenient; the inanimate, the intentitive, or the dumb Creature, hath no more Reason than Power to complain; in hort, every particular Being, however feemingly inconsiderable or minute, is as much taken Care of, as if the Deity had been wholly engaged upon that alone; 20 Confider, the "Lilies of the Field, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these;" and, " Are not two Sparrows fold for a Farthing?" But however vile they may appear to us, yet they are precious in the Sight of God; and not one of them can fall to the Ground without His special Notice and Apforms, as toundless Invention and Winner

Again, Since Instinct in Animals is the direct Impulse or Inspiration of the Deity; and the Supreme Lord and Governour of the World condescends to act in this visible Manner in and for the Meanest of His Creatures, it may be justly co-ordinate

justly inferred that the whole Course of Nature is under His special Superintendency and Direction; that His Providence is univerfal, not only in respect to Place, but to Time, that there is no Contingency admitted, no Irregularity or Error suffered to creep into His Works; but that every Thing continues to be done either immediately by Himfelf, or mediately by His fecond Causes, through the whole Duration of the Universe, in the wifest and best Manner Works of an all-perfect Aurines a selding

It is infinitely more difficult to reconcile Imperfections in the Works of the Creation with the Perfections of an infinite Creator, than to reconcile feeming Irregularities with a finite Understanding: the first, is a Contradiction in Terms, and impossible; but the last is both possible and easy, such Appearances are natural and necessary; some Productions have been confidered as mishapen and monstrous; others wild and fantastick, and been styled Lufus Natura: Earthquakes, Inundations, Voleanos, Tempelts, Pestilence, Famine, Comets, and fuch like Phanomena are not only rare in themselves, but alarming in their Consequences, and have from thence been termed Their Perions with an Air of furlivalival

In like Manner the promiseuous diffribution of the external Goods of Life, the Prosperity hour

of the Wicked, Advertity of the Good, with apparently fortuitous Events, are abstructed Phænomena in the moral World, and have been characterised as moral Evils.

Thus frail and weak Mortals without any Suspicion of their own Ignorance, or staying to question, whether that which appears irregular and confused to them, may not be regular and clear in itself, heap Objections upon Objections against Perfection in the Works of an all-perfect Author: Some indeed are so stupid as to look upon these natural Events as the mere Effects of Chance; as Things of Course; or as the faulty Productions of some ordinary Mechanick; the Folly of such Persons, who have not God in all their Thoughts, is so gross, that it sufficiently exposes itself.

But there are others who are fully personal ded of the Reality of these natural and moral Evils, and yet believe in God the Creator of the Universe, and acknowledge Him endowed with infinite Persections: However inconsistent these Articles of their Faith may be; they steadfastly adhere to them, and torture their Inventions for Means to reconcile them. These Persons with an Air of superiour Wisdom form Systems to solve these Difficulties, and with a specious Shew of Argument, labour

bour to support them, and to impose upon themselves and the World.

They reason in this Manner, that the Almighty chablished a standing Order or Course of Nature at the Creation, and instituted general Laws by which this great Machine of the World, and every Part of it, were at first for in Motion and committed to their Direct tion for its Continuance during His Pleasure; they suppose likewise, that these Laws are excellent in themselves, and as perfect as such could be, but from the Nature of Generality, it would be impossible for them to be equally applicable to every Case, and not subject to any Indi conveniencies; notwithstanding these are so very rare and inconfiderable, that the Constitution of the World will not be fo much affected by them as to deferve a particular Interpolition. and that it will be much better to difpense with some trivial Disorders, which may occafionally happen in the natural Course of Things, than to be repeatedly at the Trouble of correcting them: And in the moral World it will be likewise most advisable to tolerate for the prefent forme Inequalities, and at last or in some future State to reform them all together, than to be incessantly violating these general Establiffements, and continually rectifying what ever may happen to be the least incorrect. 1 378 Upon

34 DISCOURSE I

Upon these Principles they argue, that Errors, both of the natural and moral Kind, may creep into, and be permitted in the Works of an unerring Being, as the unavoidable Effects of a general Dispensation, and hence they infer, that as these natural Desects are beneath the Notice of the Deity, our Observations upon them will be as little regarded by him: And that the Disorders in the moral World, when considered abstractedly from their suture Recompences; may be freely arraigned, and represented as present Irregularities, without any Resection upon the Author of them.

As this is an Hypothesis big with Atheistical Consequences, betraying innocent Persons into an unwarrantable Liberty with the Works of the Almighty, and directly tending to vindicate the most impious Murmurings and blasphemous Invectives against the most High; I will endeavour in as succinct and perspicuous a Manner as the Subject will admit, to expose and results it:

That there are general Laws, or secondary Causes, by which many Things are directed, or Effects produced in the common Course of Nature, is readily admitted; but the Reasons for the Establishment of these Laws or Causes, are far different from what some have suggested.

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- The Multiplicity and Succession of the fame Effects, may require the Continuance of, and Uniformity in, the fame Caufes: The fame Nature of Individuals in the fame Species, the same Conditions of their Being, and an equal Treatment of them, may constitute the same Order and Administration, and produce a general System of Laws with respect to them.

It is also not only acknowledged, that these Laws and Causes are excellent in themselves; but I may go farther, and affert that in every Case where they are enforced, they are absolutely perfect: Why may not general Rules be without Exception, and applicable to every particular Case under them? Where is the Imposfibility, or what is there in the Nature of Unit verfality, that at all Times necessarily subjects it to Inconveniencies? General Rules are made use of in the Works of Providence, not because they are general, but because the least Deviation from them would be erroneous; and the Reason is exactly the fame, for particular Methods being preferred, when a general Course will be defective. Where general secondary Causes are not equally applicable to every Case, and induce fome Inconveniencies or improper Effects, (however rare or trivial these may be,) they never can be admitted into the Works of an infinite Being, and will always require a particular In-CRIT terpolition:

terpolition: Where Errors may be as easily prevented as admitted, there can be no Reason assigned for their Admission, but as they are Errors, there is always an obvious Reason

against it.

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It is almost impossible for us to detach our Imagination entirely from our own Frailties, on to consider an infinite Subject, not, in a finite Manner. In our Contemplations upon the Deity, we cannot help resembling Him in some measure to ourselves, and intermixing our Failings with His Perfections: This is evident in the Case before us; it is alleged, that it is much better to dispense with some occasional Disorders, and to bear for a Time with others, than to be continually infringing these general Establishments, and for ever rectifying every minute Error as often as it arises:

Here I alk, why is it supposed to be much better? Is it not for this Reason, because it requires less Attention and Attendance, and seems to be more easy and concise? But are we not thus unwittingly supposing that these must be Recommendations to the Deity, which are such to us? Easy and difficult are relative Terms appropriated to finite Beings, and not in the least applicable to an indefinite Power. All Things come alike to an omnipotent Being, Who hath all Nature at His Command, and

can do whatever He pleafes with the fame Facility and Expedition; as He is omniprefent and omniscient, He is always and equally attendant upon, and attentive to, all His Works, and therefore it is as little troublefome or difficult, if I may fo exprels myfelf, and engages no more of His Time to act in a particular, than in a general Manner; and confequently neither of them can have the Preference to the other on this Account; and when it pleases the Sovereign Creator of all Things to appoint a general Method, or depute subordinate Agents, He doth it, (not that He might withdraw Himfelf, and leave them to act without Him; but) because this Proceeding is most agreeable to His infinite Wisdom, and any other would not be so perfect: Hence as I observed before, there can be no possible Reason assigned, why any Defects should be suffered to creep !!! into His Works; and there is always a most palpable Reason, why they should not be suffered: because He would be then acting inconfiftently with His Divine Attributes; and nothing furely can be more abfurd, than to fuppole an Error to proceed from an unerring Being.

In what Things the Almighty acts by a general or a particular Providence, is for the most Part an intricate Subject, and more a curious

than a useful Disquisition; but it is indispenfably necessary for us to know, and to be well affured, that the End and Means of Divine Providence, are ever worthy of His infinite Wildom; and we should lay it down as an indisputable Principle in our Theological Enquiries, that whatever God doth, whether it be in a general, or particular Manner, is always

fittest and best to be done.

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I have inferred, that the Great Superintendent of the World, vouchfafes to distinguish Himself in a lingular Manner, for the Preservation of the feathered Kind; that He inspires them with His Knowledge, and acts in them through the whole Process of breeding, nurtering and rearing their Young: and fince it is evident that the Almighty hath in this particular Instance not committed His Influence to any secondary Causes; but is directly and immediately interpoling; or is directly and immediately acting in and through these Animals; it is a very natural and obvious Conclusion, that His Divine Providence extends itself over all His Works; that He is no where wanting, no where absent; that He doth not oblige Himself to observe any general Rules or Laws, but when it is fittest and best to observe them. and that every natural Occurrence, (whatever it may be,) proceeds either directly from Himfelf

felf, or indirectly from some deputed Cause: However marvellous Things then may appear to us, it follows, that they cannot be monstrous or mishapen in themselves; and whatever Charm the Phrase Lusius Nature may convey, when it comes to be thoroughly examined, it will be found to be most delusive; as it implies, that God wantons in the Productions of his Creatures, and sports with Deformities and Errors: Some Things, fuch as Eclipses and Comets, which were once looked upon as real Defects, or erratick Things, have been discovered to be as natural and regular, as the more common Subjects of our Knowledge: And in like Manner, Earthquakes, Inundations, Volcanos, Tempelts, Peltilence, Dearth, and luch like Phænomena, however inexplicable they may at present appear, yet I may venture to maintain that they are in themselves, and to prophecy, that hereafter they will be found to be, Events issuing from the Decrees of unerring Wisdom, foreseen and foreordained by the Sovereign Difpofer of all Things, and as ufeful, and neceffary in the Order and Administration of the World, as any ordinary Occurrences in Nature, as the Viciflitude of Day and Night; the Revolution of the Seafons of the Year; Summer and Winter, Seed Time and Harvest: I know, fays the Preacher, that "Whatfoever God doth; ce it " it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to

it, nor any Thing taken from it." are not

Whatever Connection this World may have with another; however finall a Part it may bear in the System of Divine Providence; yet it is as perfect as such a Part ought to be; and whatever is incomplete or unfinished, is not so, because it will be more easy or expeditious to perfect it at another Time, or because it is better suited to a general Proceeding; but, because it is only a Part of the Whole, and it would have been wrong or imperfect, had it been in any other Manner than as it is.

The promifcuous Distribution of external Things; the Prosperity of the wicked and Advertity of the righteous, with the apparent Contingency of Events, are no Proofs of any real Disorder or Irregularity in the moral World: It may indeed be extremely difficult for a finite Being to point out the particular Reasons for the unequal Division of this World's Goods; an equal Allotment of them might throw us into the same Station, and be inconfistent with that Order and Subordination, which the Constitution of the World may require: Or perhaps the Disposition of Mankind into these infinitely various Classes and Scenes of Life, for the Exertion of their different Talents, and the Display of 16 17 Virtues

Virtues peculiar to each Scene, may be best suited to a probationary State.

Some again may be offended with the Profperity of the Wicked and the Advertity of the Good, and imagine that they fee an Error or Iniquity in this Diffensation; but what are Advertity and Prosperity? What Influence have they upon the Mind? May not the evil Person be miserable in the midst of his Policitions? May not his Confcience frown, while the World finiles upon him? May not the good Man be supported with that inward Confolation, which nothing without can destroy? May not these precarious and volatile Things, however glaring they may appear to us, be inconfiderable in themselves? Or lastly, may it not be the Defign of the supreme Governour of the World, to place the Wages of Virtue and Vice at some Distance from them; to bear for a Time with the Failings of his Creatures, and at some future Season or Place, to recompence them according to their Deeds.

Whether these, or any of them, may be the Reasons why the Deity hath laid out the World in this Manner we know not; but this we know, that the just Judge of all the Earth hath done right; that He hath His Reasons, though we have them not; and that the World is best as it is, and would have been wrong

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had it been in another Manner: Whatever may appear Contingencies to us, are only relatively such to our finite Capacities; there is no such Thing as absolute Chance, or natural, or moral Evil in the Works of the Creation; but every Event hath its Cause fixed by infinite Wisdom, and every Thing is extremely good and beautiful in its Kind: transported with this Knowledge, may we join with the Heavenly Choir, and sing, "Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true thy Ways, thou King of Saints."

tion, which nothing without car defined his not there precurees and volutio Things, however glaring they may appears to us, be incontiderable in themselves are lately, only it ask be the Dutten of the Monome Covernment of the World to place the Wager of Virtue and Vice of march Hitamire from thing, to hear the a Time with the Pailings of his theaten, and at loine course Scalencer Place, to vecompened there we arding to their Doede, with Wheeling diele, or any of them; may be the Resture may the Desperhally bill our the World in this Manner we know not; but this direct while to ential Judged with sworth ow. been done reduct that the bath He Realing, though my laste them mote and that the World gnorw much Weed being ben at it as and at had.

DISCOURSE I.

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does, they begin contrared a what Proposer they INCE it appears from the foregoing Heads, that we have clear and full Demonstration of all Things being created, disposed of, and superintended by an infinitely wife, powerful, just and good Being; fince every the most minute Creature is providentially taken care of, and all Things both in the natural and moral World conducted in the best Manner possible, it is highly incumbent upon us to receive every natural Occurrence with the greatest Complacency and Satisfaction; and indeed, if we are convinced of this most important Truth, we cannot do otherwise; no one can be so absurd as to defire better than what is best, or so diabolical as to be offended at it; the Obligation therefore is to acquire and retain this Conviction: and the Obligation is the ftronger, from the abundant contrary

abundant Means that are offered to us; the great Book of Nature is displayed, where the Characters are so large, that " he who " runs may read them;" every Page is fraught with the Wisdom of the Author; and we may see it in every Line; but we do not attend to it; we look upon His Works as Things of Course, as ordinary Events; we do not consider from whom they come; enquire into their Nature; fee with what Wifdom they are contrived; what Purposes they serve; whose Works they are; or who is their great first Cause: If Men would do this; if they would confider and shew themselves Men in these Things, they could not but be convinced of an overruling Providence; but they must not only acquire this Conviction, they must also retain it; they do not want to much a Logician to demonstrate, as a Prompter to remind them of this important Truth: A bare formal Acknowledgment of a Divine Providence, or an occasional Affent to this Article of our Belief. is not fufficient a this Faith must enter into the Heart, and take full Possession of it; invigocate all the Principles of Action, and influence our Practice in every Circumstance of Life; any Absence or Suspension of this Faith, is, for that Time, the Want of it; a partial or temporary Infidelity; whenever Things fall out mahamma contrary

contrary to Expectation, Fancy, or apparent Interest, there will be no Difference between those Persons in their Conduct, who entirely exclude a Providence from the World, and those who exclude Him at that Time from their Thoughts; they will both act alike; be equally displessed, centure and invested against the Works of infinite Wildom, as freely as those of a Fellow Creature: It is absolutely necessary therefore, that we should be continually imprinting the Sonfe of a Divine Providence upon our Mind, that by its Presence we may correct the Frowardness of our Temper. and suppress the Instigntions of our Passions: by which Means we shall doubly enjoy the Works of the Creation, and not only receive in common the Benefits deligned us in their Effects; but receive them with Hearts full of Gratitude; and be transported with Admiration and Joy from the Contemplation of His Goodness, who is the Giver of all these good Things : Since then this extensive Duty of Resignation should make the deepest Impression upon our Mind, and be ever fresh in our Memory, give me leave to engage your Attention upon it; while I apply it to some of the most material Occurrences in human Life, and enlarge upon the Conduct of a truly refigned Person in them. deally series whether

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ations

And first, Since there is an overruling Providence, who not only forefeeth, but ordereth and superintendeth every Event, nothing can be in itself vague or fortuitous; however variable or anomalous the Weather may appear to us, yet it hath its Rules and Directions from the Most High; He distilleth the Vapours from the Earth; condenseth them into Clouds, and is their Pilot to fleer their Course; the Drops of Rain, Hail-Itones, and Flakes of Snow, (like the Hairs of our Head) are all numbered, and have their particular Destination as to Time, Place, and Quantity for watering the Earth: "He is the Father of the Rain," (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of Jos) "He shath begotten the Drops of the Deep, out " of His Womb comes the Ice, and He hath " gendered the hoary Frost of Heaven:" Whatever therefore the Weather may be, however incommodious in our Journies or our Bufiness, or however unseasonable it may seem to our Garden, Field, or Pasture, let it not betray us into any unadvited or froward Speeches; but let us ever recollect, that from whatever general Caules it may proceed, it is the particular Appointment of an omniscient Being; and however injurious it may be in some Respects, yet it is much more beneficial

in others, and must be best upon the Whole;

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may we therefore, from a full Sense of His Divine Providence, resign our strail Judgment, place an implicit Faith in God, and be pleased with whatever pleases Him: He that made the Sun and the Clouds, must certainly know best where that should shine and these should fall; and all Murmurings and Complaints against them proceed from a partial or total Root of Insidelity; it is either not considered whose Institutions they are, or they are believed not to be of God.

In like Manner, though the Wind may feem to blow where it lifteth, and we know not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; yet it hath its Controuler, Whom it invariably obeys in all its Changes; and from whatever Quarter, or with whatever Force it blows, it hath its Commission from Him, and its Point and Power determined by His unerring Wifdom: Hence, when the Storms arise and life up the Waves of the Sea, when the Ships mount up to Heaven and go down again to Hell, and are threatened every moment to be fwallowed up in the Deep; or when mighty Thunderings are fent abroad, and the Fire runneth along upon the Ground and the Wind rages horribly, spreading Desolation over the Land, and Mens Hearts fail them for Fear; then let God be the Anchor of your Hopes,

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Hopes, and let the Thought of Him whom the Wind and the Sea obey, repress the Storm in your Breaft, and support you from finking into Despair. Enlarge then your Thoughts, and confider that thele Tompelts are not confined to you, but extend themselves over a great Part of the terraqueous Globe, that Multitudes of different Animals, Vegetables, and inanimate Substances, are exposed to the Violence, and participating the like Fate with yourfelves: Since you fee the Deity continually interpoling, and by his immediate Influence acting for the Prefervation of various particular Species of Creatures, how much more will His Providence be concerned for fo general a Part of the Creation? He knows how far the minuteft Object is affected, and constantly watch eth over it; the Wind as well as every other Thing is at his Command, and when the Course of the World calls for it, and some great beneficial Ends are to be ferved, and the Good of the Whole requires it, then he bringeth it out of His Treasures, and sendeth it upon his Errands; by this Rule He stilleth the Raging of the Wind and of the Sea, and faith to them, " Hitherto shall ye come, but no " farther: Here shall thy proud Waves be " flayed." but enough agold bent bond ods

kningAthen let God be the Anchor of your

Again, let us suppose some special Disasters to befal Mankind, and the Human Race alone to be vifited with Plague, Famine, or other fore Affliction: How ought a truly refigned Person to conduct himself in these dreadful Circumstances? With what Reflections will the Sense of this Duty furnish him? If a Sparrow fall not to the Ground without the immediate Direction of the Sovereign Guardian of the World, if through His Divine Providence He nourisheth the Grass of the Field, and feedeth the young Ravens, that call upon Him, He hath undoubtedly taken care of Man; He cannot be so provident for the inferiour Parts of the Creation, and wanting to the Superiour; nay, is He not so tender of Man's Welfare, as to form some of them for his immediate Use and Service? Is not one Tribe ordered to furnish him with Clothes, and another with Food? Man must be therefore equally attended to in every other Respect; the all-influencing Providence of God is uniform and confiftent with itself, as well through all the Parts of the same Being, as in Comparison of the Whole of that Being with another: In the Seasons then of Dearth or Sickness; when the Labour of the Husbandman faileth, and meagre Famine knocketh at our Door; when the Air is poisoned with the noifome Our

fome Vapour, and the wide-wasting Pestilence stalketh in our Streets; let us consider that it is impeffible these Messengers of Death can escape His Notice, or come forth without His immediate Commission: He that instituted all the Conditions of our Mortality; who armed Death with his fatal Dart, and gave him His Orders, when and where to use it upon every Individual, most likewise have put these general destructive Powers into his Hands, and fent him forth with them; and with them he goes just as far as infinite Wisdom hath appointed, and no farther: These Visitations therefore are most right and fit, the Good of the Whole requires them; they are necessary to awaken Mankind from their Lethargy, and rouse in their an awful Senie of the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven; to give them convincing Proofs of their own Frailty, or instruct them in the Valuation of external Things; "When God's de Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteoufe and confident with really as well and one

From these general Events, which affect the whole Species, let us take a View of the Duty of Resignation in those Things, peculiar to the Individual, and consider what it requires from him in Circumstances, which distinguish him from his Fellow-Creatures.

Our

Our gracious and benevolent Creator, who nourished us in the Womb, and procured us Priends in our Infancy; who hath hitherto conducted us through all the Stages of Life, and conferred upon us all the Privileges of it, hath also thought fit to render it precarious, and fubject us to Diseases and Death; whenever then we are afflicted with Maladies (of whatever Kind, however painful, or fatal, they may be) we should receive them as sent by Divine Providence, and defigned for our Good: They cannot come from Ignorance or Neglect, becaule He is omniscient and omnipresent; neither can they be iniquitous or hard, because He is infinitely just and good; our Indisposition therefore must be the Decree of His unerring Councils; He hath weighed it to us in the Scales which his Justice and Knowledge hold; we had been incomplete or imperfect without it; perhaps too much exposed to the Allurements of Vice, or the Blandishments of false Pleasures; or it might be a necessary Counterpoile to our natural or acquired Self-opinion; a proper Remembrancer of the Conditions of our Mortality; or the preparatory Forerunner of Death; Whether thefe, or any other, were the Reasons, we cannot prefume to determine; but though we are Strangers to them in particular, we are no Strangers to the Attributes of the Deity, or D 2 into'

the general Motives by which He is influenced; and confequently we may, pay, we must rest affured, that it is best for us to be as we are; and that it is our Duty, not only to be patient, but if possible to embrace it cordially, and to rejoice in it: We know not why we were called into Life at this particular Seafon, or why the Life which is now given us should be bounded by seventy or fourscore Years, or made so uncertain within that Period, yet we find thefe to have been the Establishments of the omniscient Governour of the World, believe them to be right, and accept them as fuch: And shall we not make the same Conclusion for that Portion of Health and Sickness allotted to us within that Period? This is as much his Appointment as the other; let us relign ourselves then to his holy Will: the sweetest Viands, may, for ought we know, be poilonous; the most bitter Portions falutary: He is the fole Judge of what is proper for us; and " the Lord of all the Earth "will do right;" let us receive therefore as Such whatfoever He dothies berignes to land

Again, The external Things of this World, or the Accommodations of Life, are distributed in an unequal and seemingly promiscuous Manner; some abound with Superfluities, others have barely Necessaries; should our Lot be among the last; should we at our Entrance into

into this World, be configned to the lowest Station, and have our Dwelling, our Rayment and our Food of the coarfer Sort; or what appears worfe, should we through inevitable Calamities, be reduced from affluent to indigent Circumstances, and necessarily fall into that Contempt and Distress, which Penury brings with it, a strong and steady Conviction of the all-directing Providence of God, and Integrity of Mind, will inspire us with Resignation, and suggest to us fome fuch like confolatory Reflections as thefe, ill not propored for all Nicholate

God my Creator, is the Sovereign Lord of the Universe; all Things are His Property; the absolute Disposal of them, is vested in Him, Life with all its Appurtenances, is His free Gift; He gave me Existence, when and where He thought most proper; and adjusted all the Conditions of it; it is my Part therefore, thankfully to receive what He hath vouchfafed to give, and not to repine at what He with-holds from me: Though He bestows His Favours as He pleases, yet He doth not please to bestow them in a partial, capricious Manner; His illimitable Power is devoted to His infinite Wildom, Justice, and Goodness: When I confider the Freedom of Men's Wills, the Volatility of their Tempers, and the Mutability of Externals, I find it impossible in the present Establish-

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Establishment, that an Equality can be maintained; or if it can, it would not be right, it should; as there could be then no Use of different Talents; no Display of different Virtues; all would be confined to the same Part, and have the same Sphere to move in; nor could we exert the various Qualifications which now distinguish Individuals of the same Species, from the Straitness of our Circumstances, and the Want of different Stations, necessary for exerting those Accomplishments.

But now, Men are prepared for all Kinds of Conditions, and all Conditions are prepared for them : Some are called to the highest Places, to preside over others, and to practise the Virtues of Humility, Condescension, Affability, and Moderation, and to wreftle with Pride, Ambition, and Luxury: Many are ordered to appear in low Life, to be proved in the Duties of Induftry, Frugality, Obedience, and Submission, and to struggle with Poverty and Affliction: There are innumerable intermediate Stations, in which Men are placed, and as many diffinct Offices refulting from them: The same Person likewise is frequently obliged to shift his Part, and appear in several different Scenes of Life: but none of these are the Effects of Change or Fate; The great Author of the Drama, who introare ploritions in hear I we duced

duced us on the Stage of Life, and appointed all the natural and necessary Removes in itwith Respect to our Progress through, it, hath also given us the Characters that we are to support during that Progress, and placed us inthat Situation which is most suitable to us; be it therefore what it will, I have the greatest Reason not only to be contented with, but to prefer it to all others: I will neither wish to be in any Part of Life, than what I am in at this Instant, nor aspire after any other Station, than what I am authorized or empowered to gain: exalted unattainable Pofts may have a glaring Appearance, but they shall not excite any Ambition or Envy in me; I will oppose to such rising Passions, that they, who occupy them, are of different Tempers, Capacities, or Constitutions, and consequently what may be fit for them, may be unfit for me; my Virtues may wither in the Sun-shine, but flourish in the Shade; and the Warmth of Riches may excite some Vices, which now lie dormant through my cold or temperate Situation: Advertity fits eafier upon some than Prosperity; it is happy for most Men, that their Liberty is tempered with Necessity; I know not myfelf, much less can I judge of my Station; I will therefore leave it to Him who is intimately acquainted with both; and reft affored. es est

fured, that the infinitely wife and good Being, who hath richly provided for me in every other Respect, hath not been wanting to me in this. Could Padaratus, a Lacedemonian, when not elected into the Number of the Ephori or chief Magistrates, return home so well pleased with the Choice the Citizens had made, as to fay, " That it did his Heart good to find there " were in Sparta three hundred better Men " than himself:" and shall not I rejoice at the Election, which the omniscient Governour of the World hath made? Shall not I adore His Wisdom, and congratulate my Fellow-Creatures, that there are Millions endowed with superiour Abilities, and much better qualified for the Preference which is given them, before myfelf? I was enter to say mark wourse

And farther, what is the Difference between the highest and lowest Places, that I should make myself uneasy about them? "A Man's "Life doth not consist in the Abundance of his "Possessions:" Happiness bears no Proportion to our Fortune: Envy will realize imaginary Differences, but Contentment set all Conditions nearly on a Level; he that is pleased with the State he is in, is superiour to most Men, and inferiour to none; the only Way therefore to promote myself, is to suit my Mind to my Condition, and execute my Part well in it; this is

the Advancement of it, and a Recommendation of myself to Him, Who doth not judge of Mens Persons from the Rank or Titles they bear, but from their Behaviour in them. Most Mens Ambition outruns their Knowledge; like the Sons of Zebedee, they folicit the highest Places; and like them, they know not what they ask; it is sufficient for me to know my Benefactor, and to be fensible of my Dependance upon Him for my Daily Bread; I will go no farther, but leave it to His Divine Providence to give it me in whatever Manner He pleases; I will pray with the Modesty and Relignation of the Son of Yakeb, "Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, " but feed me with Food, convenient for me;" and wherefoever thy good Providence shall lead me, I will most willingly follow, be pleased, and endeavour to do my Duty in [1] whatever Condition, Thou, O Sovereign Difpofer of all Things, shalt think fit to place me.

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the Advencement of it, and a Recognitudition of multillio Lim, Who doth not judge of Mens Perfant from the Rank or Tides they bear, but trees their Behaviour in them, Mad Mens Analytica catting their Roowledge; like the Sons of Zeleber, they folick the highest Places: and like them, they know not what they alk ye it is fullipient for me to know my forefictor. and to be eathle of my Danesdance upon Him for my Taily Bread; I will so no lan let best with leave it set the Divine Providence to vive it me in whitever, Meaner He pleafers, I will prav with the Modelly, and Resignation of the Son of Takely " Give me neither Poyenty por Riches, but feet me with Food, convendent for meg. and where cover the good Previdence that lead me, I will mod willingly full of he pleasing, and confragous to do my Daly in MC spiners O .godfoo, Theolog Diff our sorth or tif along what a good I die to pober of the delivery of the grade party by the

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DISCOURSE II.

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Though I give all my Goods to feed the Poor; and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.

In these Words are contained, two very remarkable Anecdotes concerning Charity:

The first is, that there may be the greatest Appearance of Fruit, where there is no real Root: Though I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity.

The other is, The great Preference of this Virtue to Zeal: Though our Attachment to Religion may be so strong, that we are ready to give our Bodies to be burned for it, yet, if it be not accompanied with Charity, it will profit us nothing.

Deteription

In the following Discourse, therefore I will first explain and prove these Assertions, and

Then, make such Inferences, and inculcate such Doctrines, as naturally arise; and as this

Explanation and Proof suggest to me.

In the first Place then, I shall endeavour to explain in what Manner we may give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and not have Charity.

The Word Charity hath been fo frequently applied to Munificence or Almigiving, that it hath almost engrossed the whole Meaning of it. Though, I would not by any Means, be thought, to detract from the Merit of Almsgiving, or give the least Discountenance to its Practice, (being sensible, that when it is done in a proper Manner, it deserves the highest Commendations; and from its being the most obvious and principal Branch of Charity, it hath in a great Measure, appropriated the Use of this Word to itself;) yet Truth obliges me to fay, that Charity in its original and genuine Sense, is a Term of a more extensive Signification, and comprehends numerous other beneficent Offices demont T : is a of state /-

For the clearer Explication therefore of this Subject, it will be necessary to fix the Meaning of the Word Charity: And, as the Apostle has given us in this Chapter, a very accurate Description

Description of it, lit will be easily collected from a brief Paraphrase on his Words.

Charity, faith He, doth not behave itself "unfeemly:" it is guilty of no Rudeness, Indecency, or Ill-manners. I would illain where

To strainteth not itself, is not puffed up :" It hath no Tincture of Pride, Oftentation, or Vanity, but is full of Humility, Condescension Person, in whatever Conditions willide Affability bis

"Charity envieth not, rejoiceth not in Iniquity:" it is not of a spiteful, malevolent, or

malicious Disposition o malicious Disposition Disposition of the contract of t

" It thinketh no evil, believeth all Things. " hopeth all Things:" It conceiveth no hard Thoughts, or groundless Suspicions; but puts the most favourable Constructions, and judges in the most candid Manner, of the Words and Actions of others. Investor out of The

Charity suffereth long, is not easily pro-" voked, beareth all Things, endureth all "Things:" Hence, Patience, Meekness, Forbearance, and Forgiveness, are essential to it. Lastly, "It rejoiceth in the Truth, seeketh

"not her own, and his kind :" It is ever open to Conviction, it hath no fordid or felfish Views, but abounds with Benignity, Generolity, and Compassion or viertnes viscents and

This is the Character which St. Paul gives of Charity, by which he excludes every malevolent negwied

infication: Upon the Whole, it may be justly fixed universal Benevolence, or an humane, generous, fyinpathizing Temper, discharging every social Duty, in whatever Relation we may be considered; whether as a Member of a Family, Friend, Neighbour, Fellow Countryman, or Fellow Creature; and to every Person, in whatever Condition he may be, either in respect to us, or to the World; whether our Superiour, Equal, or Inferiour; in Prosperity or Adversity; Sickness or Health; an Enemy, Stranger, or Acquaintance?

This is plainly the Apostle's Meaning of the Word Charity, and in this Sense I will proceed to show, that a Man may give all his Goods to feed the Poor, and yet be destitute of it.

First, The same external Actions may issue from different internal Principles; and Largesses and Donations to the Poor, may be the Effects of various Causes, Popularity; Oftentation; Supersition; and even Avarice itself: And however munisicent we may appear in the Eye of the World, we may be so far from having any real Charity at the Heart; that we may be acting from Motives, not only different from, but directly contrary to its statement of the world.

Pure unadulterated Charley, is an Affection of the Mind, duly balanced by the Understanding between between Extravagance and Covetoulness; it looks at Home as well as Abroad, and hath regard to the Giver, his Family and Circumstances, as well as to the Receiver; and consequently the Heart may be large, where the Gifts are small; though Charity stands foremost in the Rank of all Christian Graces, yet a wantom Profusion that beggars ourselves and our Houshold, is, we are told, of the Dregs of Insidelity.

The Passion for Popularity may be wholly intent upon its own Gratification, and is capable of the utmost Excess; and as it may admit of no Check from within, so it may meet with the greatest Encouragement from without: Men are wonderfully prepossessed in Favour of the liberal Person; their Hearts are won by his Gifts; and however censorious the World in general may be, yet they are too thoughtless in all Respects, and too good-natured in this, to suspect his Principles, of whose Generosity they have such ample Proofs: they judge from the Largeness of the Gifts, without any Consideration of the Motives, or Abilities of the Giver.

There may be also particular Seasons, wherein it may be more fashionable to be bountiful; or when Almsgiving, and the Endowing of Hospitals; may be the reigning Humour of the ming A

Age: At all Times therefore, and especially in these, the Devotee to popular Applause, may far exceed the charitable Person, and be infinitely more liberal in his Donations to the Poor; nay, he may proceed so far as to facrifice, not only every Principle of the Mind, but all his external Possessions, to bring the People to join with him in doing Homage to his idol Passion.

It was no uncommon Thing among the Jews, in our Saviour's Time, to found a Trumpet in their Synagogues, and in their Streets, to call the People together, when they bestowed their Alms; the Pretence was, the Choice of proper Objects, and the Excitement of the like Practice in others; but the Difeerner of the Thoughts of the Heart, knew that they had no real Charity; they had no other Principles than Pride and Oftentation; they only wanted to ingratiate themselves with the People, and found no better Means for that Purpose, than the specious Appearance of this all-engaging Virtue; and therefore they endeavoured by the pompous Distribution of their Alms, to purchase the Reputation of it: It is not indeed said, that they gave all they had to the Poor, but it is not at all improbable that some did; or at least, it is easy to conceive, how this oftentatious Affectation of popular Applause might be strong enough to have induced them to do it. Again, Age:

Again, Superstition and Enthusiasm may produce the same Effects, as Pride; and Men may deceive themselves, as well as the World, with a Semblance of Charity; or they may be zealoully affected for this Virtue, but not according to Knowledge; their Notions of it may be contracted and mean; they may be Enthufiasts for a false and spurious Charity; they may suppose it to consist entirely in Almsgiving, or they may give all they have to the Poor from various religious Motives, without the least Benevolence or Pity for them: they may think of making an Atonement for their Offences; or of weaning themselves from the World, and give all their Goods to the Poor, to fet their Affections on Things above; or they may strip themselves of what they have on Earth, for the Sake of laying up Treasures in Heaven, and at the same Time, be as insensible of the Necessities of the Indigent, as of their own present Wants.

Let us for Instance, imagine a Person, through a successful Course of Injustice, to accumulate vast Riches, and drawing near his End, to be struck with a Sense of Guilt for his iniquitous Practices, and with the Apprehensions of an After-reckoning: let us suppose him enquiring, like the Rich Man mentioned by the Prophet Micab, "Wherewithal

" shall I come before the Lord, or bow myfelf " before the High God?" It is easy to suppose he hart heard, that "Charity will cover " a Multitude of Sins," and that feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, are the principal Criterions, by which he will be tried at the great Day of Account : From these Infructions, imagine him taking up a Resolution of bequeathing all he hath to the Poor:-Now. upon what Principles doth this Man make his Will? Is he not driven by the Terrors of his Conscience? Are not the Hopes of avoiding future Punishment, his fole Motives for making the Poor, his Executors and Legatees? Is there any Generofity in his Heart? Hath he any Bowels of Compaffion for the Necessitons? Is he melted into Pity by their Distresses? May not his whole Proceedings be resolved into a Principle of Avarice? Doth not all this Charity centre in himself? Is it not solely for his own Sake, that he is fuch a Friend to the Poor? And may he not be influenced in this final Parting with his Substance, by as selfish a Brinciple, as he ever was in getting or faving it? Nay, is it not possible, but he may hug himself with this fond Conceit, that he hath made a shrewd Bargain with the Almighty; and not only bought off all the Punishment due to his Extortion, Oppression, and other Hotel n iniquitous

iniquitous Methods of enriching himfelf, but even purchased an Inheritance in the next World, upon the easy Terms of parting with his ill-gotten Wealth to others, when he can no longer keep it himself.

Thus, in these Instances, it is evident, that a Person may give the whole World to the Poor, without any charitable Intention, or without any other Thoughts of them, than, as the Relieving of them happens to be the Means for gratifying his particular Passion: And fortunate it is indeed for the Poor, that it happens to be so; as this Gratification concurring with their Relief, is so accidental, that it might have been contrary to it, and then, the very Reason, which now makes him so excessively munisicent, would have obliged him to have been as cruelly coverous and oppressive to them.

But lastly, I may go farther, and venture to affert, that a Man may bestow all he hath upon the Poor, even from a Motive of Tenderness and Compassion, and yet have no just Title to this Virtue of Charity, as it is characterized in this Chapter:

A proud, envious, revengeful, or malicious Perfen, may, when his Passions are dormant, or their Objects removed, be affected by the Distresses of the Afflicted: and his Paroxylin

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of Kindness may be the stronger, in being the Flight of the Mind from its contrary Bent: But true Evangelical Charity is a permanent Habit, uniform and steady in its Course; a Plant of such a delicate Nature, that it will not thrive, where any Thing of a contrary Quality is near; it must overspread the whole Soil, and slourish without a Rival; it must be the ruling Passion, animating every Principle of the Soul, and influencing the whole Conduct: as a few Acts of Iniquity are sufficient to denominate a Person unjust, so the Character of Charity is destroyed by as few malevolent Actions.

No one hath so little Knowledge or Experience of the World, as not to observe many, through Ignorance or Narrowness of Education, prepoffessed in Favour of a few, and prejudiced against the rest of Mankind; the Rays of some Men's Benevolence are so contracted, as to reach only to their own Family or nearest Relations, and they are indifferent to, or hardened against all the World besides: How often are Men seen to treat those who differ from them, either in religious or civil Opinions, as if that Difference had diffolved all the Ties of Humanity, and authorized them to act with the utmost Insolence and Barbarity? These Bigots may discharge all the Offices of Charity to Persons of their own Way of Think-

ing:

ing: Their Benevolence and Malevolence may act upon each other, and fuch an intemperate frothy Zeal may be fubtilized by the Ferment of these contrary Qualities; that, as on the one Hand, their Life and Estate may be deemed too little Offerings to their Party, to on the other, Pride, Envy, or Malice, may raise fuch a violent Disturbance in their Breast, and enkindle fuch a fiery perfecuting Spirit against their Opposers, as to confume them and their Substance; the Temper of these Men, may be faid to bear fome Refemblance to the Pillar of Fire between the Ifraelites and the Egyptians, which gave Light and Comfort to the one, and Darkness and Diffress to the other; but it is declared by the Apostle to be fiftent with Charity, "Which envieth not, " thinketh no Evil, and rejoiceth not in Ini-" quity:" All such bigotted Partizans, therefore, are exceedingly defective in this Divine Accomplishment, which like the Sun, shines without Exception upon all, and communicates its Heat and Light to every Thing around.

Hence it is evident, that a Person may give all he hath to the Poor, and have no Charity. I will now proceed to the other Part, and consider in what Manner a Person may give his Body to be burned, and that even for the Religion of Charity, and yet have none in himself.

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Some from natural Constitution are almost insensible of Fear, and impatient to expose their Lives upon the slightest Occasion: though the Fear of Death is in general a strong Passion in human Nature, yet a warm Imagination, fired by an Enthusiastic Zeal, is frequently known, not only to suppress it, but to excite an earnest Desire of meeting the Flames, in Testimony of an invincible Attachment to

the Objects of that Zeal,

In the Ages of Ignorance and Superstition, it was no uncommon Thing for religious Rigots to prove their Tenets by their Faith and fervent Zeal; and the Firmness of their Attachment to them, was miltaken for Strength of Argument: There is a remarkable Instance in Ecclefiastical History, of an Enthusiast offering himself to be burnt, in Confirmation of the Opinions which he professed*: And this was received as an incontestable Proof of their Truth, till another, as obstinate an Enthusiast as himself, arose, and made the same Offer for the Establishment of the directly contrary Opinions: Here then was Demonstration against Demonstration; Things were reduced to the fame Uncertainty they had been in before, and nothing could be inferred but the Fanaticism of

A Friar of the Party of Savanarela, of the Dominican Order; and a Monk of another Order, in Italy, about the Year 1500.—
See the Life of Pope Alexander VI. and his Son Cojar Bergian.

DISCOURSELL

these Monks, and the Truth of our Proposit tion, that Men may give their Bodies to be burned without any Appearance of Charity: As Zeal hath no necessary Connection with Truth, to it hash fill lets with Charley; they are widely different in their Nature; that is fanguine and warm, this is gentle and cool: And it requires no little Prudence to attemper them mutually in fuch a Manner, that both may be preferred in their due Degree; that the Fine of Zeal may not burn up Charity; nor the Coolness of Charley extinguish Zeal, but the chief Danger is on the Side of Zeal; the leaft Spark of which is strangely apt to inflame the other Passions and harden the Heart. If a Perfon (as it hath been supposed) may contract such Prejudices, as to think it a meritorious Act to destroy all those, who cannot pronounce his Sbibboleth, and at the same time, be so excessively attached to those, who can, as to part with all his Goods for their Sake; is it not eafy to imagine that the same Person may be as ready to lay down his Life as his Estate for the Service of his Party? The History of all Ages and Countries abounds with Examples of uncharitable Zealots, who are ready to burn or to be burnt for the Cause which they espouse: And there is one, recorded in the Annals of this Kingdom, so pertinent and full to the E 4 Point.

Point, that nothing need be added, to evince the Truth of the Proposition: I mean, the Inflance of that desperate Wretch, who, in his enthusiastic Frenzy, lost all Sense of Humanity, and even of Self-preservation; wrapt up in the Conceit of being a Martyr on Earth, and a Saint in Heaven, he attempted to destroy the whole Legislature of this Kingdom assembled in Parliament, together with himself, by that execrable Gunpowder Plot, which nothing but the most hellish Malice could devise, and the most diabolical Zeal execute.

chief Danger is on the Side of Zeal; the louft South of which is the appearable it inflames to which other Paillons and harden the Ments. If a Perdoubt factings very (billiong of their ties) me; Projudice, as to shark at a michigant Act to defacy all shale, who callinot pronounce his shale butth, and at the lame sime, be to executively attached to thoic, who can as to pert with all his Goods for their Sakes is it not only to Imagine that the lines, Penon may be as south to law down his Life as his Lifele for the nervice of his larry? The Halory of all Ager and Countries abounds with I xamples of nachailtable Zework, who are ready to burn or to he burnt for the Caule which they expoule? And there is core, recorded in the Assalt in this Misgoom, is perforent and full the the

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DISCOURSE II.

The next inference that I deal make from

this Subject is, that the Charity, which acts by Intermission H is soft criefies Artis the follower the Periodiced, and can letter the Periodiced of Brue.

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Proceed to deduce the Inferences, and enforce the Doctrines which naturally arise.

And, the first and most obvious Inference
is, that the Intention, and not the Ast,
is the Measure of Charity.

Let the external Act be carried to the highest Excess; let all our Possessions be given to the
Poor, yet, from what hath been said, it appears, that it may be the Essect, not only of
a different, but of a contrary Principle to Charity: Where there is Charity, there is a bendvolent Temper; a real Sympathy with the Asslicted, and Bowels of Compassion for the Distressed; and he who hath no such Temper or
Feeling, how extensive soever his Donations may
be, or whatever Appearances he may assume,
hath no Charity. On the other Hand, he, who
hath such a Disposition or Sympathy, though
he hath not so much as the Widow's Mite to

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svigards all the Sons of Men.

give, is as charitable as if he had given the whole World: Charity is according to the Largeness of Men's Hearts, and not of their Estates.

The next Inference that I shall make from this Subject is, that the Charity, which acts by Intermissions, is sometimes partial, sometimes prejudiced; and can fuffer the Passions of Envy, Revenge, or Malice, to get the Ascendant over it, is a spurious and adulterated Charity; these being inconfident with the genuine Properties of this Virtue; which is universal Benevolence, and extends to all our Fellow Creatures, of whatever Country, Religion, or Profession they may be; in must be equal and uniform; flowing with an uninterrupted Course, and having no Respect to Persons: Our Saviour hath given us a Specimen of this Virtue, in the Bel haviour of the Samaritan to the Person, who, travelling from Jericho to Jordan, fell among Thieves, was stripped, wounded, and left half dead : The Samaritan did not flag to enquire of what Nation, People, or Religion he was, but as this miserable Object bore a human Form, he could not help bearing a humane Heart towards him: He was in fact, his Neighbour; because he did all neighbourly Offices by him; and this is the true Character of Charity, which Christ commands us to bear A third towards all the Sons of Men.

A third Inference that offers itself is the surperlative Excellence of Charity, and since it
was the principal Design of the Apostle, to
raise in us the highest Sense of this Duty; I
will enlarge and recommend the Practice of
it, by shewing you what Rank it bears among
all moral and Christian Accomplishments, and
in what Manner it stands distinguished, both
by natural and revealed Religion.

Benevolence is the principal Characteristick of his Nature; to fay that we are rational Animals, is not giving above Half the Description of us; Humanity is an effential Part of our Constitution; and we had better have been without Reason than without humand Affections; by losing that, we only lose our Nature; but without these, we invert it; we induce a savage Temper, and degenerate into Brutes and Monsters.

Charity is our noblest Qualification, as it is an universal practical Principle; it bears a Pant in every Duty; it is concerned almost in every Circumstance of Life; and it should direct our whole Conduct, in whatever Capacity we adt; as a Member of a Femily, Relation, Friend, Neighbour, Fellow Citizen, or Fellow Creature: Society may subside by Justice, which will terminate Disputes, and prevent the exters

nal Acts of Enmity; but Charity will make us fincere and cordial Friends; it is the Band which unites our Minds, and links our Hearts to one another: Justice corrects the Evils; Charity dispenses the Blessings of Society.

"There is no Torment (faith St. John) in Love;" it is full of Complacency and good Humour; and there is no Satisfaction equal to the Confciousness of deserving well of all: He who considers all Mankind as his Family and Relations, and seeks to promote their Welfare, can have no Subject of Fear or Discontent; he hath the whole World to be happy with; every Man he meets is his Friend, and every Object gladdens in his Sight.

Hence, Charity considered as a moral Virtue, appears to be one of our noblest Accomplishments; but, its Excellence will shine forth with brighter Lustre, from the Light which revealed Religion casts upon it: Not only in this Chapter, but through all the sacred Writings, it is characterized as the Queen of all

Christian Graces and Perfections, Van Christian

It is described, both in an absolute and a relative Sense; by its intrinsick Goodness, and its superiour Excellence to other Qualifications.

"This Virtue (faith the Apostle) never faileth;" the Gifts of Prophecy, Tongues, and Knowledge, were only temporary; they

were to cease; but Charity is a perennial Accomplishment; it will never be unseasonable, nor unsashionable; but it is coeval with human Nature, and will continue, as long as Man and Society exist.

As Goodness is the most amiable of the divine Attributes; and as God hath created us after his own Image, by diftinguishing us from all others, as benevolent Beings, and endowing us with larger Capacities for doing good, on what Virtue could our gracious Creator lay a greater Stress, than on this, by which, we heighten our Resemblance to Him, and raise the human to a Godlike Nature? For which Reasons it is easy to suppose, that the blessed Author of our Religion hath made it the Mark, by which his Disciples are to be distinguished; " By this, fays He, shall all Men know that " ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one for " another;" Let the Exhibition of this Virtue in your Practice, be the Declaration of the Religion in your Heart; and extort this Confession from all Mankind, There goes a Difciple of Jesus Christ, you may know him by his extraordinary Love, and Charity: As our Lord himself then hath instituted this Principle, as the chief Qualification of a Christian, it is highly incumbent upon us, to diftinguish ourselves by it. and Trave flies is about of the or !

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And again, we read that "the Fruits of the "Spirit, are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-fuffering, "Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness," all which, are the peculiar Properties of this Virtue.

Again, when we confider what is faid of Charity in a comparative Sense, it appears to be, not only the most considerable of any Qualifications, but to out-weigh them all together? Alone, it will compensate for many Defects in other Parts of our Duty; but all other Qualifications will not atone for any Desiciency in this.

The ceremonial and inflituted Parts of Religion, are Means to an End; they cannot stand by themselves, "I will have Mercy, and not "facrifice," (faith the Lord): Moral Virtues can recommend themselves; they can go no farther: but "Charity will cover a Multitude of "Sins;" it is so acceptable in the Sight of God, that where He finds it, He will excuse many Offences for its Sake.

Upon whatever Motives Men may give all their Goods to feed the Poor, whether for the Sake of Power, Applause, an Atonement for their Sins, or the Accumulation of Treasures in Heaven; or however near an Approach they may make to this Virtue by practifing it, even to one Half of Mankind, yet, if they are wanting in it to the other, it will avail them nought.

" Though

"Though we are inspired with supernatural Knowledge, and understand all Mysteries, and all Prophecies; though we have the Gift of Tongues, and with the Eloquence of Ansigles can communicate this Knowledge, and explain these Mysteries, yet if we have not Charity, we are Nothing; we are only (mere Shew and Noise, like) sounding Brass, or a mikling Cymbal."

Our Belief in God is not well founded, unless built upon this Virtue: "How can a Man "love God, whom he hath not seen, if he "love not his Brother, whom he hath seen?"

And our Faith in Christ will be ineffectual. without Charity: St. Paul draws a Contrast between Faith, Hope, and Charity, and expressly afferts, that " the greatest of them is Charity;" it is a nobler Accomplishment; a higher Recommendation to the Almighty: nay, it is not only the greatest of the three Christian Graces, but, supposing even Faith to be so strong as to remove Mountains, yet it will be Nothing in Comparison with Charity: In the Infancy of Christianity, when our Religion was supported by Miracles, Faith was either a supernatural Gift, or when it arose to such a Degree it was accompanied with supernatural Powers: which ever it was, the Apostle not only afferts, that it might be without Charity; but he affures Work!

would be infignificant and useless; thought we believe all the Prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, to be completed in Jesus Christ; and all His Miracles recorded in the New; and though we are so firmly persuaded, that He is the Saviour and Redeemer of the World, as to be ready to give our Bedy to be burned in Testimony of it, and for that Reason, have been endowed with supernatural Power, yet, if we have not Charity, the principal Qualification and Characteristick of a Christian, all this strong Faith will prost us nothing.

Laftly, as our Saviour hath made this Virtue the principal Qualification of his Disciples, so it will be the chief Criterion, by which He will try them, when He shall come to Judgment: "Many will plead, that they have or prophefied in the Name of Christ, and by " His Name have cast out Devils, and done " many wonderful Works;" but these are not the Tests, by which they will be tried; it is not faid, that Men will be asked, what Faith have they had in Christ? How many Profelytes have they made? Or, how zealous have they been in propagating, or defending His Religion? Should these be the Topicks of Enquiry, the Publication of them is purposely omitted, to fhew

fhew what Stress will be laid upon Works of Charity: And, that all other Qualifications are not worth mentioning, in Comparison with that: It is only revealed, that, at the last great Day of Account, (when we shall be summoned to appear before the just Judge of Heaven and Earth, who will pass an irreversible Sentence upon us, according to what we have done in this Life,) we shall be interrogated, what Offices of Charity we have done? Have we fed the Hungry? clothed the Naked? visited the Sick? or been hospitable to Strangers? And if these appear so universal, as to extend to the least of our Fellow Creatures, or of the Brethren of our Lord. He will confider them as done to Himfelf, and reward our Charity with eternal to affect any officialistics blew on this Virigial

The last Inference I shall make, is, that if there be no Merit in a Man's facrificing his Life for his Religion, when it is done without Charity; there must be a great Demerit in uncharitable Zeal, which, for Religion's Sake, destroys the Lives of other Men: Though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity; the Supposition is purely negative; here is only a bare Desect of this Virtue supposed; the Temper may be wholly indifferent; or there may be no Disaffection or Hatred in it; yet, in this bare Absence of Charity, or indifferent State

of Mind, we are affured, that a Spirit to fuffer Martyrdom, or to lay down our Lives for Religion, will profit us nothing: What shall we lay then of a perfecuting fanguinary Spirit, the very Reverse of Charity? If the Want of this Virtue precludes all Favour, the acting contrary to it, must incur the highest Penalties; and they certainly will be the farthest from being admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, who, not only come without the Wedding-Garment required of them, but in a Habit directly contrary to it: And he will have Judgment without Mercy, who hath thewn himself unmerciful.

To conclude, from the Whole of what hath been faid upon this Subject, let us learn, not to affect any oftentatious Shew of this Virtue or to build our Thoughts of it, upon the Report of the Multitude; but fince we may know ourselves best from ourselves, let us look into our own breaft, and examine the Principles we are acting upon: Let us cultivate an humane and generous Temper; let the Heart go before the Hand; and let the Feelings of another's Diffreffes, be the Motives to our redreffing them; that they may bear witness to our Charity, and God, who is greater than all, confirm their Testimony, to make their on a

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As univerfal Benevolence is the most excellent moral Endowment, and the principal Christian Perfection, let us give it the chief Place in our Affections, and make it the End of all our Attainments: Charity, for ought we know, may be accepted without Faith; Charity supporteth this Hope: But we are expressly told, that Faith without Charity, will profit nothing! Let us then make Charity the Object of our Zeal: Let us be emulous in good Works; Let us provoke one another to Acts of brotherly Kindness: Let our Zeal and our Charley act upon each other; let us be zealoufly charitable, and charitably zealous: As universal Benevolence is the Substance of our Religion, if our Faith be void of it, we believe, we know not what; and are zealous for promoting a Religion in others, which we want in ourfelves: And, furely he can by no Means deferve to name the Name of Christ, however strong his Faith may be, whose Christianity detracts ought from his Humanity: Is it not absord, to suppose a Person to be the less a Man, for being the more a Christian? And what greater Perversion can there be of our Religion, which qualifies us for the Company of Angels, than to be made an Occasion for disqualifying us for human Society?

Love is the Characteristick of our Religion, and which, the Professors of it ought to distinguish themselves by; if they have not this Mark, they may be the Vassals of Ambition or Avarice; they may be Slaves to Prejudice and Paffion; they may be blind Bigots in Superstition or Enthusiasm; but they cannot be the Servants of God, or the Disciples of Jesus Christ: He, that professeth Christianity, professeth a Religion of Patience, Meekness, and Benevolence; he engages to free his Heart from all Envy, Revenge, and Malice; and hath made a folemn Vow, that he will be of a peaceable Temper; will love his Neighbour as himself; and be in Charity with all Men; and if he fail in these Points, he is a Scandal to his Religion; and whatever his Profession may be, his Principles and his Practices are Anti-Christian: Consider, how inconsistent it is to enforce the Doctrines of Love, with the Spirit of Hatred; or to be zealous for supporting the Religion of Charity, by Cruelty and Persecution: He that is angry with his Brother for any Difference of Opinion, is mostly to blame, for losing his own Temper; and by the very Means that he is using to restore him to the Faith, he is casting himself the farther from it: The Unity of the Church is best preserved, by Unity of Affection; and Uncharitableness is the worst Herefy.

resy. Let our Faith then work by Love; and though we cannot be of one Mind, yet, let us be of one Heart: Let us shew by our Gentleness, Forbearance, and Forgiveness, what Spirit we breathe, and whose Disciples we are: May Christianity ever convey to us the Idea of Love! May there be no other Contention among its Members, than that of outvying each other in Benevolence! May we heap Coals of Fire upon the Heads of our Enemies, in no other Manner, than by forgiving and feeding them! And may we display the Excellence of our Religion, and confute the Gainsayings of our Adversaries, by approving ourselves the most faithful Friends to Mankind, the most worthy Members of Society, and the kindest Neighbours! "So shall we be the Sons of "God, and make one Fold, under one Shep-" herd Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the " God of Peace, Who brought Him from the " dead, make us perfect in every good Work,

" nour, Glory, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for ever."

to do His Will; to whom are due all Ho-

refer ther can Faith then work by Lovey and though we cannot be of one Mind, you let us be of one Heart: Let us friend in our Gentlerieff. Forbearmen, and Forgivenels, what Spirit we breathe, and whole Dikinger we care: May Christianity, over convey to his the lidea of Lote! May there be no culter Contential as mong in Members, than that of ourveing early other in Henevelence! With we head Cotte of Fire upon the Heads of our Enceptes, in no other Manners than by foreigner and feeding them! then rate we display the Excellence of compRedigion, and con trie the Ostation asket our Adwicking, but depend on applicable the Smire office Spidential of the order of the last officer wenther his motion of Society, and and could reduce Neighbodie i de Malli een beschool en beschool et -quid an ante one por interest of the charge beed Julia Chile con Lord, and this the " God Lil Pelice, Who became little from the S deady makes in perfect in every good William Lord the east our encountered that all the or " " notes Clare, where William Majories and

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DISCOURSE III.

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AMOS V. 24.

Let Judgment run down as Waters, and Righteoufness as a mighty Stream.

HE Prophet, in this Chapter, laments the deplorable Condition of the House of Ifrael, who had provoked the Lord by their Imquities, and drawn down His heaviest Judgments upon their Heads; He earnestly exhorts them to leek the Lord, and to make their Peace with Him; but this Peace, He tells them, was not to be made by Sacrifices and Offerings, without the Sacrifice of a penitent and upright Heart; that " If they continued to afflict the Just, to take a " Bribe, and to turn afide the Poor in the "Gate from their Right, their Application to " Him would be fruitless; I hate, (saith the Lord by His Prophet) I despite your Feast-" Days, and I will not finell in your foleren Affemblies; though ye offer me Burnt-Of-" ferings, " ferings, and your Meat-Offerings, I will not

" accept them, neither will I regard the Peace" Offering of your fat Beafts: Take thou

" away from me the Noise of thy Songs, for I

" will not hear the Melody of thy Viols; but

" hate the Evil, and love the Good: Let

" Judgment run down as Waters, and Righteouf-

" ness as a mighty Stream, and the Lord God

" of Hosts will be gracious unto the Remnant of

Just generat rum down as War desdood ?"

applications,

Nothing can be more obvious, or more remarkable in these Passages, than the Presence which is given to Justice above Sacrifice: They were both enjoined by the Mosaical Institution, and apparently sounded upon the same Authority: This had as large a Share in the Religious, as that had in the Civil Polity of the Jews; yet, we find Justice to be such an indispensable Qualification, that the observance of the whole Class of Rituals, and positive Institutions, could not atone for its Absence, and was deemed, not only insignificant, but offensive without it.

I do not propose to enter into any particular Comparison of these Duties, or to exalt the one, by depreciating the other; my Design is, to enforce the Words of my Text, which I shall attempt.

Anitembies , chough we offer me Brunt-Of-

First, by enquiring into the real intrinsick Merits, and describing the peculiar Properties of this Virtue;

And fecondly, By inculcating the Doctrines, and pointing out the Uses resulting from them.

Justice then, in its utmost Latitude, is to render to every One his Due, whatever Relation we may bear, or in whatever Manner we may be indebted, to him; and in this Sense, it comprehends our whole Duty to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves, and is composed of the Virtues of Piety, Charity, and Temperance.

But Justice generally, (and in this Place particularly) is taken in a limited Sense, as only a Branch of social Duty; or as rendering what is due to every Man, when considered in a civil Capacity; or, in respect to his Property, or his Actions, as a Member of the Community!

And, of this focial Justice, there are two

One confiders Men as Equals, and is the doing what is honest and fair in their commercial or private Transactions with one another: This is called, reciprocal or commutative Justice:

The other Part, regulates the Behaviour of Superiours to Inferiours, and is both an impartial Dispensation of Rewards and Punishments, and an equitable Decision in civil controverted Causes;

Causes; and this Species, is generally distinguithed by the Title of diffributive Justice !

. Both these Parts, (but principally the latter) are included in the Words of my Text; and in this Sense therefore. I shall consider them. and proceed to let before you, some of their

diftinguishing Charactericks of and prove or rab

The first Excellence of this focial Virtue which offers itself to me, is, that it is equal, impactial, fit, and right in heelf, founded upon Truth, or, is rather a Part of Truth itself as it hath all the Properties of it; it is uniform, confiftent, and agreeable to the Reafon and Nature of Things; more invariable, than the Law of the Medes and Perhans; and like the Son of God, the fame Yesterday, To-day, and for ever : In the Holy Scripture, Juffice and Touth are expressed indiscriminately; it is write ten, " Thy Law is the Truth; All thy Com-" mandments are Truth :"-" Truth is fallen in the Street, and Equity cannot enter?"-"None calleth for Justice, nor any pleadeth "for Tauthe-Execute the Judgment of Truth " in your Gates."-" The Law of Truth was " in his Mouth:" And lastly, " To them who do not obey the Truth, but obey Uner righteoufiefe." hat a maintain a aminima

Secondly, As Justice is Truth, fo the God of Truth is the God of Justice; It is natural and effential

effential to Him; His noblest Perfection, and supreme Attribute; absolute, uncontroulable; and which, infinite Power, Wildom, and Goods ness, serve and obey: "Justice and Judgmene " are the Habitation of His Throne;" It dwelleth with, and is established by them: " The " Lord is righteous in all His Works;" Juffice is the Rule of His Actions; He made all Things in the Creation of the World by its Weights and Measures; " He weighed the " Mountains in its Scales, and the Hills in its " Balance:" And it is evident, that Justice is the Perfort whom Solomon introduceth under the Name of Wildom, (from the Defeription the gives of herself;) " The Lord possessed me in the Beginning of His Ways, before His Works of old : When He prepared the " Heavens, I was there; when He fet & Compass upon the Pace of the Deep; when He " gave to the Sea His Decree, that the Water " should not pass His Commandment; and when He appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then was I by Him, as one brought " up with Him, I was daily His Delight, re-" joicing always before Him."

And, as Justice accompanied the Sovereign Author of Nature, in the Formation, so it is His constant Attendant in the Preservation of the World; His Sceptre is a right Sceptre;

Sceptre; His Administration is equal; and His Reign is the Reign of incorrupt Justice, supported by Almighty Power and unerring Wifdom; the Laws of His Kingdom were inftituted, and are put in Execution by it: All the Subjects of His universal Empire, are equally bound, and equally protected by them: "God is no Respecter of Persons; He regardeth "not the Rich more than the Poor, as they " are all the Work of His Hands a" and though He can do what he pleases with His own, yet He is pleased to do nothing but what. is fair and upright: It would indeed be impertinent in the Clay to fay to its Potter, "Why "hast thou made me thus?" yet He hath fashioned it as truly, and dealt by it as equitably, as if He had absolutely been accountable to it: Nay, under the Jewish Dispensation, when God vouchfafed to speak by the Mouth of His Prophets, and gave the most explicit Declarations of His Will, He condescended to a human Arbitration, and called upon the House of Ifrael to judge of His Actions, by the fame Canon which He had given them to square their own by; " at what Time he pleaded His " own Cause with them, and challenged them " to shew, wherein His Ways were unequal." A third Property of this transcendent Virtue

is, that it is necessary and essential to Society, which Second e.

ever

which derives its very Being from it, and could not subsist the least Part of Time without it; Fears may drive, or Hopes draw Men together; but it is Justice which forms them into a Society, and keeps them in it, when it is formed; that every Member may do and receive Justice, is the Principle upon which it is built, and upon which it must stand.

In the general Society which comprehends all Mankind, the Rules of doing as we would be done unto, of Humanity and Benevolence (which result from its very Constitution, and by which it is supported, and must continue to exist,) are the Institutes of natural Justice; every diffinct civil Community, is a Subdivision under this Greater, subordinate and subservient to it; and all the various Forms of Government, are only collateral Affistances, or artificial Improvements of this universal natural Society; they are all established upon the same Principles, and calculated for the firmer Union of their respective Members, and rendering them more worthy Citizens of the World: And all local political Statutes, or municipal Laws, are nothing more than Explanations, and Promulgations of Parts of the general Institutes of Justice, adapted to particular Seasons, Places, and Circumstances, with additional Enforcements for the Observance of them; and what-

Foorthie,

ever human Ordinances do not coincide with, and fivengthen those, are useless and troublesome; and what interfere with, or contradict them, are in themselves null and void.

In like Manner, as every Civil Polity is founded upon, and derives the Sanction of its Laws from publick and diffributive Juffice, fo it is no less indebted for its Welfare and Prof. perity to private and commutative fustice: which is the Life of Commerce, and creates that Trust and Confidence among Mankind, without which, there could have been no Exchange of the Fruits of their Labours, nor any free Communication of the Goods of Life: Common Wants are redressed, and mutual Af-Mances reached out by its impartial Hand: It is the fole Arbiter of Disputes, and Preserver of Peace, by amicably terminating Mifunderstandings between Mon, and reconciling their several Interests; and in general, it is that powerful Cement, which binds all the Parts of a Society, and renders it one compact Building, whole Strength is in exact Proportion to the Justice that is spread in it; if it runs through the Whole, and filleth every Joint, then the House ie, (what Ferufalem was,) at Unity in itself. indiffoluble within, and impregnable without; " Its Walls are Salvation, and its Gates ments for the Obligation of them a Rainfall

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Importance and Necessity of this Virtue, may also be inferred, from the gracious Provision which our omniscient Creator hath thought fit to make for the Practice of it.

As He defigned us for a focial State, fo He hath made all the Preparations, and furnished us with all the Qualifications, both external and internal, proper for it; He hath formed reciprocal Dependancies, and made a Communion of our Powers, absolutely necessary for our Welfare; He hath also endowed us with Understanding to discern these Dependancies, and imprinted the Principles of Justice on our Minds, in such legible Characters, that " he " who runs, may read them; the wayfaring "Man, though a Fool, cannot err therein:" Every one knows what it is to be honest and just in his Transactions; Providence hath made this the common Sense of Mankind, and all, not only acknowledge and appeal to it, as to a well known Rule, but their Conviction is accompanied with a Sense of an Obligation; they feel it to be their Duty, and their Conscience will prompt the Observance, and upbraid them for the Neglect of it.

But farther, as Justice is the very Soul of Society, it hath been judged necessary, for the more effectual Security of this vital Principle, to reinforce this Knowledge, and this Sense of

Iniuffice

Duty,

Again, as the Dignity and extensive Influence of this Virtue calls for every Recommendation, let us now take a View of it in a different Light, and see how its Picture will be heightened, by setting its opposite Quality, as a Foil to it,

Injustice then, is false and dark; hath an inherent natural Turpitude, and is odious in itself, and offensive to the Deity, "who is of "purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity:"—"He hath no Pleasure in Wickedness, neither "shall Evil dwell with him: The soolish "shall not stand in His Sight; He hateth all "the Workers of Iniquity." As Justice is the Cement, so Injustice is the Dissolution of Society; where it enters, a Debility and Relaxation necessarily ensue; as it increases, the Strength of the Edifice decreases, 'till at length, all the Connections are entirely broken, and the Parts not only disunite, but gain a repulsive Quality, and start and sty from each other.

And farther, if we wanted a clearer Demonstration of Injustice being the Bane of Society, we might borrow Arguments from the Profeffors of Iniquity, who furnish us with Weapons against themselves: the very Principle which unites their Intentions against Mankind, cannot unite their Affections to one another; and should these Sons of Rapine pursue their Scheme to its utmost Latitude, and be uniformly unjust through their whole Conduct, every Que's Hand would be lifted up against his Brother, and his Brother's against him; and the House of Iniquity, thus totally distracted within itself, ninevitably, fall; when, therefore, fluence

therefore, they enter into a Confederacy among themselves; for the more successful Practice of Injustice, they are obliged to act inconsistently, to desert their own Profession; and find it absolutely necessary to call in Inflice to their Affistance, and observe some Rules of Honesty and Honour among themfelves, to hold them together, and form the Bands of Iniquity: Manifold Experience hath abundantly proved, that their Combination is never more effectually broken, than when they are induced from the Motive of Lucre or Self-Preservation, to act upon their own Principles; and are led to impeach and betray their Combanions: How little Trust can they repose, then, in one another, whose very Profession is to deceive? How unnatural must all those Schemes be, which are inconfiftent with, and subversive of themselves? And, in what a desperate Situation are those Projectors placed, who are compelled to act against the Bent of their own Minds, for carrying them into Execution; and while drawn together by their common Interests, are repelled from one another by their common Principles? words fluing whence

But on the other Hand, with what powerful Recommendation doth that Virtue come, which the Practice of its most inveterate Enemies, bears such a Testimony to? What vast Insluence fluence must it have, when it reaches even to those who are farthest removed from it? If this forced and partial Application of it, be so useful and necessary, even to its Foes, how infinitely beneficial must it be to those real Friends, who devote themselves entirely to its Service, and direct their whole Conduct by it?

But, to finish the Contrast; — There is an innate Aversion in the human Breast to Injustice; we are ashamed of it in ourselves, and loathe it in our Neighbour; Nothing renders a Person more contemptible in the Eye of the World than Iniquity; and where Nature operates freely, Men cannot avoid being affected even at the Relation of Violence and Oppression, however distant from them in Time or Place; and moved with Indignation against the Oppressor:

But this leads me to inculcate the Doctrines, and point out the Uses resulting from this Subject.

And first, since Justice is right and sit in itself, and agreeable to the Nature and Reason of Things, it must be intrinsically and essentially good, and merit universal Regard, and Esteem: as it renders to every One his Due, it ought in return to have its Due; and be gratefully received by all: There is a Beauty in G 2

100 DISCOURSE III.

Uniformity and Confistency; and if Truth in general be venerable, how facred ought that Part to be esteemed, which, in an especial Manner, concerns us and our Welfare?

Again, As the nobleft Conceptions we can form of the Deity, are chiefly drawn from His Justice; as He, with this Attribute alone, will appear most excellent, but without it, seem monstrous in some Respects, and defective in all, the Idea of a supreme Being, should always convey to us the Sense of infinite Justice: How glorious must that Virtue be, which fets a Lustre upon, and perfects all His other Attributes, when Omnipotency (through its Direction) becomes awful, but not dreadful when Mercy excites Hopes, but not Prefumption, (being tempored with it 1) and when Knowledge (confidered as its Attendant) is extenfively beneficial, and superlatively amiable? What inexpressible Satisfaction must it give to all the Subjects of His universal Empire, to find this Divine Accomplishment, to be the darling Object of the King of Kinga! Hence, they both love and fear Him, His Service is perfect Freedom : Faith, in this foreneign Attribute, is the Source of genuine Piety , when we are firmly perfuaded, that what He commands us to do is indifputably right, and what He appoints us to fuffer, absolutely best for us, then

then we are all Obedience and Refignation; we make His Will our own, and whatever Difficulties or Diffresses we meet with, they appear in the Mirror of this Faith to be Benefits; and through an implicit Trust in His Justice, we receive them with Complacency,

But, if fuch an ample Confidence be placed, through the Means of this unerring Power, in the Deity, a proportionable Degree of Credit will be given to every other Poffesfor of it; If it be the brightest Diadem in the Crown of Heaven, with what Radiance must it shine in cur Breaft ? It will perfect there every Endowment; and by prefiding over our Affections, and directing the Understanding, and all the Powers of the Mind, heighten our Resemblance to our Creator, and exalt the human to a godlike Nature.

But, thirdly, As Justice is the Bond, and Injustice the Dissolution of Society, it is the first and principal Duty of the most social of all Beings, to pursue the one and detest the other. Injustice is infamous in itself, and odious in the Sight of Mankind, we should flee from it therefore, as from the Face of a Serpent; to which we have a natural Antipathy, and whose Bite is fatal: And as nothing can be expected from open or publick Villainy, but Shame and them is Sew the highest Re-

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Confusion of Face, let no Man flatter himself that he can make any Advantage of covert Wrong: How can one Kind of Iniquity be amended by what is worse? Can Hypocrify give what it hath not? Or, can Good refult from the Composition of two Evils? To be foul within and fair without, to hide a corrupt Heart under a found Form, is such an arduous Talk, that the most artful Diffembler cannot long prevent a Discovery; but however difficult the Task may be, the Sons of Iniquity find it impossible to succeed without it; and at length, to their Sorrow, impossible to succeed with it: Dissimulation would be fincere and inconfistent with itself, if, with the Shew of deceiving others, it did not turn its Cheat upon its Followers; let us take Care therefore how we lay any Stress upon that Vice, which destroys all Confidence in one another, and is like " the sharp-pointed " Staff," (mentioned by the Prophet,) " on " which, if a Man lean, it will go into his " Hand and pierce it."

But farther, since Justice is essential to Society, and Men can no more live as social Beings without it, than they can breathe without Air, should they not esteem it as precious as their Lives? Both their Interest and their Duty call upon them to shew the highest Re-

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gard to it; and in whatever Circumstances they are placed, or in whatever Capacity they act, they should make it their constant Companion and their Guide.

If they be considered merely as Individuals abstracted from Society; even in this partial View, it will appear a most desirable Accomplishment; and fince it hath pleased the Author of all Righteousness, to implant in us a Love of Justice, the cherishing and improving of it, is following the Direction of Nature, or a Concurrence with the Will of God; it is strengthening that Affection, which will balance all the rest, and establish a general Equanimity and Peace of Mind: Ot, asserting that

If we be considered as Members of a Family, or in respect only to our nearest Relations, Justice is as necessary in the least as the largest Societies; nay, it may bind the faster in having the sewer Subjects to enclose; it is therefore the Composer of domestick Harmony, and "bringeth Men to be of one Mind in an "House:" And if it be a joyful Thing to dwell together in Unity; and Quietness under our own Roof be the next eligible Blessing to Quietness in our own Breast; how ought we to adore that Qualification, by which alone, this Joy and this Blessing can be obtained?

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Again, if we confider ourselves in respect to our Fellow Creatures, or as Members of civil Society: fince Justice is a Standard fixed by Nature, a well known Rule, which all the World acknowledge and appeal to, let us, who are acting in a private Station, learn to make it a Rule to ourselves, for adjusting our Debts and Demands, that we may not give less, or require more, from others, than what Justice metes out to us all: The Way to be dealt fairly by, is to deal fairly; if we act uprightly by our Neighbour, we may expect, and for the most Part shall find, that he will act uprightly by us; what Measure we mete, will generally be measured to us again; Justice will breed Justice; nav, it will foon do more; it will breed Benevolence and Love: Though it is a Debt, for whose Payment we really deferve no Thanks, yet in many Cafes, the Creditor, where it is refused, bath no Remedy against his Debtor, and in all, will find it difficult to recover it; he will think himfelf therefore under forme Obligation for the prompt Receipt of it, which, by frequent Repetition and Retaliation, will necessarily create a mutual Confidence and Endearment there is a very easy Transition from Probity to Love; they are nearly allied to one another; the first is the legitimate Parent of Friendship,

thip, and from being habitually righteous, we thall foon become benevolent and generous.

But lastly, if Justice be such a necessary Qualification in private Life, how much more valuable must it be in a publick Station, and especially in those who are the Professors and Dispensers of it; the Influence of the private Person, is that of a weak Spring, whose Current is small, and of a short Extent; but they who act in a publick Character, are the main Sources of Equity, from which, when open and free, Judgment (uncorrupted and pure) will run down as Waters, and Righteousness as a mighty Stream, diffusing itself thro' the whole Land, refreshing and enlivening every Plant, from the proud Cedar to the humble Moss; then, the Earth will bring forth her Increase, " and every Man, fitting under his Fig-Tree " and his Vine," reap unmolested the Fruits of his Labours, and enjoy all the Bleffings of May her Decrees neither less on in and valle

"How beautiful are their Feet, who are not
"only the Messengers, but the Authors of Peace,
and make the Glad Tidings which they bring?"

How is every Breast enlarged at the Approach of those venerable Magistrates who are clothed with Righteousness, and whose Judgment is as a Robe and a Diadem; who make the Heart of the Innocent to dance for Joy, and of the Innocent to dance for Joy, and of the Innocent to dance for Joy, and of the

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Guilty to tremble for Fear; "Who are Fa-"thers to the Fatherless, and the Cause, which "they know not, they search out."

Thrice happy is that Kingdom, where evenhanded Justice confers her amplest Rewards on the most deserving, however obscured in the low Vale of Life; and weighs out her heaviest Punishments to the vilest Criminals, however distinguished by their Birth, their Title, or their Fortune!

But however blind she may be with respect to Men's Persons, may she ever be most quick sighted in the Discernment of the Truth!

May the pour forth the largest Vials of her Fury upon those Caitiffs, who dare to violate her Courts, or attempt to subvert her Judgments by Perjury or Corruption!

May the injured always find free and eafy Access to her, and speedy and effectual Redress from her!

May her Decrees neither lose ought of their Value from frivolous Delays; nor be embarrassed with unreasonable Expences!

And may those Stewards, who are selected for their Abilities and Integrity from their Brethren, and entrusted with the Interpretation of the Laws of their Country, use their discretionary Power in making them contain the Substance, as well as the Form of Justice; and through

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through their liberal Constructions, may they abolish that unnatural Distinction between legal and right; and prevent this Virtue, which is most amiable in her native Simplicity, from being enveloped in her Drapery.

So shall they who sit in the Seat of Judgment, be accounted worthy of double Honour; worthy to be revered for the High Office they bear; and more worthy to be adored for

the faithful Execution of it:

And so shall they arrive at the highest Pitch of Glory that Ambition can aspire to, or Perfection reach, either in this World, or the next, the Verdict of Conscience in their Favour, and the Seal of universal Approbation upon Earth, and the Ratification of both in that supreme Court of Justice, where their great Archetype, the all-just Judge of Heaven and Earth, will sit to receive them with that welcome Eulogy, "Well done, ye good and "faithful Servants; ye have been faithful over a few Things, I will make you Rulers over many; enter ye into the Joy of the Lord."

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of his Possessions, and visited with Assistions, and he would appear what he really was, and corrected Bornard Word Shire

This Objection feelns to imply that the Principles of Piety should be entirely difinterested, and that we should group out the Permission View of serving out elves: And the Permission

To folve therefore this Objection, and to explain at large the Nature of Self-Interest, will be the Subject of ichio Piccourfe, wherein

Doth fob fear God for nought?

"he had confidered 700, that there was none like him in the Earth, "a perfect and upright Man, who feared God, and eschewed Evil?" He made no direct Reply; but questioned, whether Self-Interest was not the real Principle of his God-lines; and then urged in Support of this Infinuation, that he had always been helled with Affluence; that all his Undertakings had been crowned with Success; and no Misfortune or Malady been suffered to approach him; and therefore, his Piety had never been put to the Trial; but let him, continued he, be stripped of

of his Possessions, and visited with Afflictions, and he would appear what he really was, and curie God from the same Motive then he now bleffed him.

This Objection seems to imply, that the Principles of Piety should be entirely difinterested, and that we should serve God without any View of ferving ourselves: And the Permission of the Trial, seems to admit and confirm it.

To folve therefore this Objection, and to explain at large the Nature of Self-Interest, will be the Subject of this Discourse, wherein

I shall observe the following Method:

First, I shall endeavour to shew in what Sense the Pursuit of Self-Interest is natural; and enquire, whether we are under any Obligations to purfue it, and what odw they are inquipu bus former w

Secondly, I will proceed to prove, that the Principle of a true Self-Interest is a -bo proper Ingredient in severy Principle of linefs; and then urged in Supportailis In-

di Thirdly, Shew in what Senfe the Pursuit of need Self-Interest is unnatural and vicious; fet 10 sabefore you the feveral Species of a criminal has Selfishness, and explain wherein the Force and cof this Objection liesy Doth Job fear Trial; but let him, contil addude rol bolipped And

And lastly, I shall make such Observations as offer themselves to me from the Discussion of these Subjects, and will point out the Uses that are to be made from them, and what Instuence they ought to have upon our Practice.

First then, I shall shew in what Sense the Pursuit of Self-Interest is natural; and sen-quire, whether we are under any Obligations to pursue it, and what they are

But, in order to treat this Subject in a clear and diftinct Manner, it will be previously necessary to describe what Self-Interest is, and to determine the Sense, in which it is here understood:

As Man is a compound Being, he may be affected in various, and even contrary Ways, by the same Object, in different Parts, or at different Times; Thus, for Instance, the Pleasure of the Palate may be succeeded by the Pain of Diseases, or imbittered with uneasy Resections, and both may constitute one complicated Effect of the same Intemperance; Gain may be the present, and Loss the suture Consequence of the same Act of Fraud or Oppression; in like Manner, a momentary Satisfaction may spring from an excessive Indulgence of any Passion, which will be necessarily supplanted by Shame and Remorse.

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To form therefore, a true Judgment of our Interest, from any fingle Thought, Word, or Action, or from any Composition of them confidered as one Cause, we must not reckon upon some Effects, and omit others; but when all the Consequences resulting from the same Cause, however distant in Time, or in whatever different Manner affecting us, are collected together, and taken into the Account; when the Sums total of their Good and Evil are duly estimated from their Degree and Duration; when they are fairly cast up on each Side, and compared together; then, if the Difference which arises from this Balance, be on the Side of Good, that will exhibit our true and real Interest from that Caufe !! buncomes a at the Mana

This true and real Interest in general resulting from the complete Consequences of any Part, or the Whole of our Conduct, is the Interest which is meant in this first Head; which, being thus premised, I proceed to shew, that the Pursuit of it is natural.

And first, Self-Love is a natural and univerfal Passion, implanted in us by our All-wise Creator, and inseparable from us; it is the main Spring of human Actions; all other Appetites and Affections, seem to be only Parts of this principal Movement of the Will, and are subordinate and subservient to it; but it is evident,

evident, that Self-Interest is the proper Object of this Passion: If then, any Appetites or Passions be essential to our Constitution, or any Gratification of them natural, it follows, that the Pursuit of Self-Interest must be natural likewise.

Again, Self-Preservation is the first Law of Nature, both as it is the first Lesson which Nature dictates, and our nearest Concern; but what is Self-Preservation? Is it only shunning impending. Evil or present imminent Destruction? Doth it not comprise, and direct us to the Use of, all prudential Means, to avert every greater or less, every present or distant Evil, and embrace every Good? And what is this, but the Pursuit of our genuine Interest?

Or in other Words, doth not Self-Preservation consist in taking a proper Care of ourselves? And is not this proper Care a Pursuit of Self-Interest? Is there any Distinction between them? Can there be any real Self-Interest, which doth not imply a proper Care of ourselves? It is evident there cannot be; and therefore, this Pursuit must be as natural as Self-Preservation.

But farther, the Observance of this Law is so necessary, that Providence conducts us, and in some Degree impels us to it; our Appetites and Passions are Instincts, exciting us to the H

Use of the Means of Life, or the Execution of the proper Offices of it: We have Defines to draw us to what is good, and Fears to repel us from what is Evil; we are driven by Antipathies or Aversions, from noxious or fatal Things, where Reason or Experience would too late, or too faintly, warn us to keep our Diftance: As these Preparations and Instructions lead us to present curselves and prosecute our Welfare, the following them under the Direction of the Understanding, is a Conformity to the Law of our Nature, and consequently, the Pursuit of our real Self-Interest must be natural.

But it may be objected, that this Argument proves too much; if the Purfuit of Self-Interest be natural, then it will be necessary; and with a matural Necessity, there can be no moral Obligation:

To this I teply, that though Self-Love is to strong a Passion, that it is impossible not to dove outselves, yet there is no Necessity of loving outselves in a proper Manner; the Passion itself is natural and necessary; but the Intention and Remission, the Application and Direction of it, are in our Power; these are Subjects of Liberty and Discretion, and consequently of moral Obligation; We have no intuitive Knowledge of our genuine Intensit, it is placed

Reason and intellectual Powers, to investigate and ascertain it; though the Pursuit of our Interest in general be necessary, yet the particular Application of ourselves to our real Interest, is the Act of a rational and free Being; we are bound to it, only by the Laws of God and the Dictates of Reason and Conscience, and consequently it is a moral Obligation, which leads me to the next Thing proposed to be enquired into, Whether we are under any Obligations to pursue our Interest, and what they are.

First then, we are obliged to pursue our Interest, because it is Piety and Obedience to the Creator and Governour of the World.

When we contemplate this stupendous System of the Universe, and ask, for what End there are such a manifold Order of Beings, and such an infinite Variety and perpetual Succession of Individuals? What Solution of this Question can give greater Satisfaction? Or, what Cause appear more adequate to such an Effect, than that Life is conferred as a Blessing on every Animal; that Almighty Power with unerring Wislam, hath filled boundless Space with inpumerable Creatures, for the Display of illimitable Goodness? this is an End, worthy the Means H 2 used

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used to accomplish it: What Subject can be conceived more proper for the Exertion of the Divine Attributes, or, more correspondent with the great Author of Nature, than the universal Good of the World? If all Creatures are called from Non-existence into an eligible State, and by their Creation are rendered happy, or placed in a Capacity of being happy, then Life is a desirable Blessing, and our Creator will stand to us in the Relation of a Benefactor and Patron.

Since it appears then, both from Reason and Observation, that Happiness is an Endowment most worthy of the Deity; and the Good of all His Works, the View of His Divine Providence; fince He hath done every Thing on His Part, which is just and right, and, only ceased to act where He hath enabled us to execute for ourselves; it must be our Duty to proceed upon His Plan, to promote the fame great End, and improve His Gifts into the Bleffings defigned: The Profecution of our true Interest therefore, is a Concurrence with the Will of God, a Vindication of His Divine Providence, Gratitude to our all-gracious Benefactor, and Piety and Obedience to the fovereign Author of Nature. 101 annute and oldstone

Again, As all Creatures are Fellow Subjects, and form one univerfal Society under the fupreme

preme Governour of the World, there must be an entire Connection of its Parts, and a Coalescence of Interests; every private Welfare must contribute to, and constitute one general Good; and each particular Grievance or Evil, in some Measure affect the Whole: All therefore, are bound to pursue their own Interest, as they are Fellow Creatures and Fellow Members of this universal Kingdom; and as the Pursuit of it is a general Concern.

And Men are not only Denizens of the World in general; but diftinguished, in a peculiar Manner, as a Species of benevolent and focial Beings, more intimately connected with, and more nearly related to one another: whose reciprocal Dependancies are stronger; who have a more free Communion of Good and Evil, and more fensible Union of Interests, than Animals of a subordinate Nature: They are endowed likewise, with strong benevolent Affections and sympathetick Powers, through which they sympathize with one another, and participate each other's Joys and Sorrows; every Man is obliged, therefore, by the Duties which he owes to his Fellow Creatures, and by the Laws of Humanity and Benevolence, to confult his own Welfare, as the common Interest of Mankind; when he fuffers, all the Members of the fame Body fuffer with him; and, if it be H 3 unjust regard

unjust or unlawful for a Man to set his own House on Fire, when his Neighbour's is contiguous to it; as the Flames may be communicated, and another involved in the same dreadful Calamity; what greater Violation of publick Justice must it be, to pull down the House upon our own Head, when many are contained in it; or to injure ourselves or our Interest, when all have a Share in them, and we demolish what is a Part of the Property of others?

But farther, we are still more closely connected with our intimate Acquaintance, our bosom Friends, our near Relations and Families; they are more dependant upon us, and more fenfibly affected by our Conduct; they are, as it were, a Part of ourselves, we have one common Weal, and rife and fall together: We are acting therefore for others as well as ourselves: all the Offices of good Neighbourhood, the Bonds of Friendship, and the Ties of Affinity and Confanguinity, are fo many additional Obligations to purfue our Self-Interest: " If any provide not for his own, and " especially for those of his own Houshold. " he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than " Infidel:" But how can a Man provide for them, while he takes no Care of himfelf? His own Interest is included in theirs, and the Difregard

regard of himself, is the Neglect of them: His Religion therefore, obliges him to pursue his own Good, as it is a Part of his Family's Welfare; and his Self-Provision, is a Duty which he owes to his Wife, Children, and other domestick Relations.

Laftly, we may be confidered as bearing a Relation, and owing a Duty to ourselves. And here are several concurrent Circumstances, which, in an eminent Manner, oblige us to the Prosecution of our true Interest.

As, first, we best know ourselves and our own Heart; we are best acquainted with our own Necessities, Infirmities, Propensity of our Passions, and the Power of our intellectual Capacities; and consequently are competent Judges of our true Interest, and the Things wherein it consists.

Again, the Care of ourselves is peculiarly committed to us, and chiefly placed in our own Power; Self-Love is a Passion immediately under the Tuition of our Reason, whose Province it is, to guard against its Desect, as well as Excess; to prevent its Misapplication, and direct it in such a Manner, as to obtain its desired End. And this is more incumbent upon us, because no one besides can execute this Charge for us; who can be a Friend to him, who will be none to himself? Another's good H 4

Offices may facilitate his endeavours, but can avail but little without them.

We are likewise nearest related to ourselves; and situated in the Centre of our own Sphere; if then another's Connection with, Dependance upon, and Proximity to us, oblige us to pursue our Interest for his Sake; the closer Connection, greater Dependance, and immediate Proximity to ourselves, will more oblige us to the Pursuit for our own Sake.

And for this Reason, the Duty to ourselves is prior in Nature, to the Duty to our Neighbour; as it is a superiour Obligation, by which other Duties are directed; social Affections must be moderated by Self-Love; the Promotion of our Brother's Welfare, made to coincide with, and, subordinate to our own; Hence it is, that a Solicitude for another will be excessive and criminal, when it diverts us from a prudent Concern for ourselves; and a Liberality beyond our Circumstances, degenerate into a rash Profusion and Extravagance.

There is no Injunction, indeed, in the Holy Scriptures to love ourselves; as it would have been unnecessary and superstuous; we want no Spur to this Love; the only Danger lies, in giving a false Direction to it; but the Duty is implied in several Parts of the sacred Writings; it is written, "Thou shalt "love"

"love thy Neighbour as thyself;" here the Love of ourselves is not only supposed, but made the Measure of our Love of him, which ought to equal, but not exceed it; if then we were not obliged to love ourselves, or if it was unlawful to pursue our own Interest, we should be under no Obligation to love our Neighbour, or to promote his Interest: This Duty to him, is thus connected with, and rests upon the Duty to ourselves; and we might have had no Charity abroad, had we had none at home.

To all which, give me Leave to add, that Self-Love is not only the-Master Passion, but comprehends all the Affections of the Mind, which seem to be different Streams, issuing from the same Source or Fountain-Head; and consequently, all the Obligations which an intelligent and moral Being is under, to exert his Reason in the Government of himself, and the Discipline of his Passions, concur in exciting him to the Regulation of his Self-Love, and the just Prosecution of his own true Interest.

Upon the Whole, it appears, that we are obliged to study and pursue our own Welfare, as it is a Part of our Duty to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves.

"Jone thy I signifour as shytelis," here the Love of such the as not only supposed, but made the shield of our Love of him, which one in the court of the him, which we were not our level of the shield our level of the supposed in a partner our own interest, we should be under no Obligation to love our level him is thus to bill, is thus considered with, and refusion to bill, is thus considered with, and refusion the land of thus to carriers and we mish, and refusion had not considered and we mish made the land of the land we had not at home.

Jo all which, give me Lewe to add, that experiences in not only the Mediar Pathien, but experiences all the Affections of the Miles, seen that feet to be different breamy, idining from the there have on hearthin-Affect in the feet the Only annihilation which makes elligent and moral Beng is truey, to exerting Resion in the Covernment of himself, and the Only singular covers in even in even in the Daylone, or his Pathional covers in evening thin to the Regulation of his Pathional covers in evening him to the Regulation of his Selections and the there in the the the the things of his Selections and the things.

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pagnancy, between them s Since then we are under force Obligations, to profecute our West

HE next Thing I shall shew is, that the Principle of Self-Interest is a proper Ingredient in every Principle of Virtue.

For which End, it may not be improper to premise, that the Principle of Interest cannot be inconsistent with any Principle of Virtue, because it is itself, (as I have just prov'd) a Principle of Duty: As Reafon cannot oppose, or be incompatible with, Reason, so one Obligation cannot counteract another; we cannot in a moral Scale, be drawn in contrary Directions; the Kingdom of Light is not divided, like the Kingdom of Darkness, against itself; it was an ingenious Observation, which Cicero made upon a profligate Roman, that " he had been more vitious, had he had one " Vice left," meaning Indolence; but the like enalvel

like cannot be applied to a good Man; no one Virtue can destroy the Practice of another, or render any Person less virtuous; there is a persect Harmony among all the Virtues; they confirm one another, and by the Addition of the least, every good Principle is re-inforced: Our Duties may admit of a Comparison; there may be greater or less Degrees of, but no Repugnancy, between them: Since then we are under some Obligations, to prosecute our Welfare, no other can counteract them; but on the contrary, all seem to be subordinate to the supreme Law of Self-Preservation, and subservient to the Pursuit of our real Self-Interest.

I proceed now to prove, that the Principle of a true Self-Interest, is a proper Ingredient

in every Principle of Virtue. and take share

And first, In general there seems to be an inseparable Connection between Virtue and Interest; the one is a necessary Consequence from the other; and our Happiness must arise from the Reason and Fitness of Things; there are no Propositions upon moral Subjects, which come nearer to self-evident Axioms, than these, what is conformable to Nature and Truth is good; that is, naturally good or advantageous: To act as it becomet a Man in all the Circumstances and Conditions of his Station, and agreeably to the Relation he bears to all the Persons

Persons he is concerned with, is the Way to a manly and rational Enjoyment of Life.

Thus, Virtue appears to be the fole natural Means to our Welfare; and therefore, Self-Love, with the knowledge of applying it, leads us directly to the Practice of every Virtue, as the proper Means to our Interest; but, if this End must be attained through these Means, how can we be obliged to use these Means, without any Reference to this End? If the Principle of Interest obliges us to be virtuous, can the Principle of Virtue oblige us to be disinterested? Must not these Principles be consistent with, and coincide with each other.

But to enter into a more particular Disculfion of this Subject, I will consider the Virtues, first, which have some apparent Connection with Self-Interest, and then proceed to examine those which seem to be farther removed from, or least consistent with it.

And first, there are some Virtues so intimately connected with our Interest, that it constitutes their very Essence, and is the only Criterion by which they can be ascertain'd, or distinguished from their opposite Vices.

Of this Kind, is the Virtue of Occonomy or Frugality; the very Idea of it is formed from a Sense of its Utility; there is no describing

scribing or determining it without its Benefits: What is this Virtue, but such an Adjustment of our Expences to our Income, fuch a Diftribution of these Expences in procuring the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life, as will best serve the Uses designed, and afford the greatest Enjoyment of them? Take away this End, and the Virtue itself is deftroyed, and there will be nothing left to distinguish it from, or bound its opposite Viens, Extrava-If the Principle of Internationary A bas some

Temperance likewise of every Kind, (and evidently in our Diet) must be ascertained from our Interest. That Use of Food which supports Nature, preserves Health, Strength, and the free Exercise of our intellectual Faculties is Temperance; there can be no Temperance, no Virtue, without these Benefits: they are implied in its very Nature : Our Interoft. therefore, is not only an Ingredient, but the fole Principle of ir; and the Extremes of this Virtue, are formed from its contrary Evils.

Again, There are some Virtues, of which, though Interest doth not constitute the Effence, yet it is manifestly an inseparable Property of them editingo dieds most bedringentlib

The Wages of Diligence, are such a direct and natural Confequence, that Mon connot avoid feeing and being affected by them; they enidire1

are necessary Motives to this Virtue, without which, its Practice cannot be supporteds and are conflantly urged, as proper Excitements to it, and never deemed in the least derogatory of the Merit of the industrious Person! in every Principle of Date. Ladrag

Of the same Nature, are the Victues of Contentment, and Equanimity of Temper-

And laftly, There are few Virtues which do not exhibit to our View, some of the Rewards from Self-Interest :

they produce.

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The human Mind, likewife, is to disposed by Providence, that it is naturally and necesfarily prepoficifed in Favour of Virtue It constantly presages Good from it, and we have the ftrongest Assurances from within, that our Happinels is entailed upon it; every One is fentible, that a good Conference is the peculiar Attendant of Virtue, and an evil Confeience of Vice; that the Testimony of one, is the most definable Bleffing this World can give, and the Reproaches of the other, the direct Evil; and confequently, he that is folicitous to fecure the first and avoid the last, is the true Lover of himself, and provident of his own Intereft; but these are always acknowledged as just Principles of Action, and constantly applied, not only as lawful, but effectual Topicks, richt in ceneral we are affüred, that it will be

for recommending and enforcing the Practice of our Duty, to and so it is it is

Hence therefore I infer, that Self-Interest is a necessary and natural Principle in these Virtues; and also a proper Ingredient in general, in every Principle of Duty. But for a more full Explication of this Subject, I proceed, as I proposed, to the Consideration of other Virtues, which seem to have the least Connection with, or to be farthest removed from Self-Interest:

And they are Piety and Benevolence :

I have observed, already, that the Pursuit of our Welfare, is Obedience and Gratitude to the Deity and, if this be one Branch of our Duty to Him, it cannot be inconsistent with any other wife we serve God by serving our felves, we cannot be required to obey Him without any Regard to our own Service.

And farther, our whole Duty to God is contained in an implicit Refignation to the Divine Will: We suppose, first, that God is an infinitely perfect Being; oinnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient; and therefore what He doth, must be wise, fit, and best; our Resignation is built upon this Confidence; we know not indeed the particular Ways and Mearls, by which His Providence will effect this End; but in general we are assured, that it will be produced

produc'd, and therefore we rely upon Him for it: Every Act of Divine Adoration, is accompanied with a Sense of our Dependance upon Him, and an Expectation of His Protection; they are implied in the very Titles, by which we address Him, as our Creator, our Governour, and our Father; we believe that His Providence extends over all His Works; we know that He introduced us into this World, when and where He pleased; that He preserved us before we were capable of either deferving or defiring His Favour; and therefore we truft to the Continuance of it; and implicitly relign ourselves to His Will, being firmly persuaded that He defires our Good as much as we do ourselves, and that He knows it infinitely better: Thus our Preservation, or the Sense of the Bleffings we have received, and the Hopes of what we shall receive, or, in other Words, our Interest, is the Spring and Principle of our Gratitude, Piety, and Obedi-ence to Him: Are not all the Arguments for enforcing these comprehensive Duties of Acquiescence and Complacency under all the Dispensations of Divine Providence, drawn from this Topick? Do they not all concur to prove, that every natural Occurrence is the Institution of unerring Wisdom, impartial Justice, and unlimited Goodness, and therefore, that

that it is best for us to submit to it? That it is both our Duty and our Interest to think ourselves safest under His Direction who prefides at the Helm of this World, and steers

it according to His good Pleasure?

If we confult the Oracles of Divine Revelation, we shall find, that the Principles of Piety are still more intimately connected with those of Interest; and that all Obedience is quickened by the additional Motives of extraordinary Rewards and Punishments: The Mosaical Laws had the Sanction of temporal Bleffings and Curses: " A rich Land (flowing with Milk and " Honey, abounding with Wheat and Barley, "Vines, Fig-Trees, and Pomegranates, whose "Stones were Iron, and out of whose Hills " they might dig Brass,) was promised to the " Obedient; and Famine, Pestilence, Disper-" fion and Defolation, were threatened against " the Disobedient."

These present and temporal Enforcements were changed into future and eternal, by the Christian Revelation, which, by setting before us an infinite Reward and Punishment, refers us principally to the Confideration of Happiness and Misery, and recommends the firmest Attachment to our highest Interest, as a necessary Incitement to the Practice of Piety and Virtue; - These transcendent Recompences are not appropriated tarf:

appropriated to any particular Duties, but proposed as Inducements to a general Conformity to the Will of God; had they not been revealed, we could not have expected them; but when Glory, Honour, Immortality, (" Joys " which Eye hath not feen, nor Ear heard, " nor the Heart of Man conceived,") are proffered to them that do Well; when Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, are denounced against every Soul of Man that doth Evil, it must be absurd to suppose, that we are obliged in any Respect to do what is good, or abstain from what is evil, without any Regard or Reference to these Sanctions, or without any Hope of the one or Fear of the other.

It appears therefore, that the Principle of Interest is a proper Ingredient in every Princi-

ple of Piety.

The next Virtue I purposed to consider, is Benevolence, which at first View, seems to be farthest removed from Self-Interest; and some Moralists and Divines, through their Refinement of this Virtue, and to raise a more sublime Idea of it, have thought fit to add the Epithets of diffusive and disinterested to it; implying, that it should be so universal as to comprehend the whole World, except Him from whom it proceeds; -But this is an unreasonable Exception, and upon a nearer In-CHIOUS **fpection**

spection into the Nature of this Virtue, Self-Interest will be found to be properly compounded with every Principle of it, and its

The Principle of true Benevolence must proceed from a perfect Knowledge of human Nature; or from well-regulated Affections; or from a Composition of both: If we enquire into the Nature, Condition, and Circumstances of Mankind, we shall find that they are converfable, communicative, Animals, made to live together, and endowed with Qualities both of Body and Mind, adapted to a focial State: that their common Wants and reciprocal Dependancies, form their Relations to, and Connections with one another; from these Considerations we learn, that the Individual is imperfect, incomplete, and cannot subfist alone; that Men were made for, and must support one another; that there must be a free Communion of their Powers, and a Circulation of good Offices; each wants the Affiftance of his Neighbour, and his Neighbour of him; and he must serve himself by serving another; Thus from the Sense of their own Necessities, and the proper Manner of redreffing them, or from the Knowledge of their dependant and allied State, they are led to cultivate a generous and benevolent Disposition: The Obligations abiBaat

gations to Humanity, feem to be derived from the Union of their Interests; were these inconfiftent with, or contrary to each other, their State of Nature would be a State of War, and the Law of Self-Preservation would oblige them to annoy and perfecute one another: Or, were their Interests unconnected with, or independent of each other, there could be no publick Good or common Danger; (as in a Rope of Sand no Prin-ciple of Union,) but they would be as indifferent to, or estranged from one another, as if they had been of different Species, or born in different Planets; The Coalescence and Harmony of their Interests, therefore, are the Bond of Union, and the Cement of Society; we promote the general Weal, because we ourselves partake of it; and we do all the good Offices we can to our Neighbour, because he is a Part of our felves, or at least, a Part of that Whole which we all compose, and because we cannot sublist in any defirable Manner, but by reciprocal Support. All the principal and cogent Arguments, likewise, that are urged for humane and compassionate Actions, are drawn from the To pick of Self-Interest: Are we not referred to the Confideration of ourfelves and our interest, when weare instructed, that "we should do to others as 13

" we would be done unto," that we should transfer ourselves into our Neighbour's Situation, and reflect what our Wants and Defires would then be, and make them the Rule of our Conduct towards him; and lastly, that." we should love our Neighbour as ourselves"?

Thus Self-Interest is concerned in the Expofition and Enforcement of this Duty; and the Benevolence which is acquired by Reason, and the Knowledge of human Nature, is established upon the Principle of Interest, and a due Re-

gard to ourselves.

But fince the Powers of Reason are much too weak in the Generality of Mankind, to give them a perfect Sense of their concurring Interests, and the Necessity of mutual Affistance; or, to excite such a Spirit of Benevolence, as may qualify them for the Discharge of the Duties of their confederate State; Providence hath thought proper to re-inforce these Powers with focial Affections, and to furnish our Minds with Sympathies and Fellow-Feelings; through which there is an internal as well as external Union of Interests; we participate our Neighbour's Joys and Sorrows, and his Condition becomes our own annothing mos

Now these social Affections, may either alone, or jointly with the Understanding, be the Principle of benevolent Deeds. Ale Laboratini arnavi

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When moved folely by these Affections, we are not only a Kind of mechanical and necessary Agents, but however generous we may appear to be, or alert in the Cause of another, we are wholly directed by a self-interesting Spring; another's Sufferings through this secret Sympathy, are communicated to us; they create an Uncasiness in our Breast; which Uncasiness, impels us to sly to his Succour, for the Relief of ourselves; thus we act through the Insuence of an immediate Self-Interest, and it is through this admirable Provision of our all-

By the Influence of an immediate Self-Interest, or by a Principle of Self-Interest, I mean any Motive of Pleasure or Pain, or, which excites to a Pursuit of Pleasure, or a Flight from Pain; or to any other Means which contribute to the Promotion of Self-Interest; though there may be no direct Intention, or View, to that End.

An ingenious Author expresses himself in an inaccurate and unguarded Manner, when he says, that "It seems undeniable, "that there is such a Sentiment in human Nature, as disinterested Benevolence; that nothing can bestow more Merit
on any human Creature, than the Possession of it in an eminent Degree." See Essays by David Hume, Esq; Lib. iv.
Sect. 2. of Benevolence.

By difinterested Benevolence, I suppose, he means only a Benevolence without any direct Impulse of the Assection of Self-Love; and without the least Thought or Consideration of Self-Interest: But should he mean a Benevolence entirely free from every Instigation of present Pleasure or Pain; and from any joint View of mutual Interest, with the Object of his Benevolence; it may be fairly questioned, whether there can be such a disinterested Benevolence? And if there can be, it will be unreasonable and unnatural, because a Principle not raised from the Assection of Benevolence, (as it must then be accompanied

gracious Creator, that we are carried by our Self-Love to the Redress of our Neighbour's Grievances to the are word and anage want

But if Benevolence proceed from focial Affections, unitedly with, or under the Direction of the Understanding, then, as each Principle by itself, is founded upon Self-Interest, the Result of their Composition must be homogeneal with their separate Nature; it is impossible that they should do jointly, what neither of them have any tendency to do distinctly.

But farther, I argue that there is a Duty to ourselves as well as to our Neighbour; that we are endowed with the Passion of Self-Love as well as social Affections; that there are reciprocal Dependancies, and an Harmony of Interests; all which Principles ought to be duly attended to, and have their due Force on us.

Self-Preservation is the first Law of Nature; and we are nearest related to ourselves; this, therefore, ought to be principally regarded, and made the Basis or Measure of our Duty to our Neighbour; we are most impersect, if

panied with present Pleasure or Pain;) nor can it arise from the Sense of the Union of our Interests; (as this would include our own;) but it must be raised from the Opinion of another's Interest, being either unconnected with and separate from, or contrary to our own, which is unnatural and absurd.

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wanting in this Branch of our Duty, and acremost against Reason and Nature, if, through our Attention to all other Things, we are districted from all Consideration of ourselves.

Benevolent Affections are a constituent Part of our Mind, and it is right that they should have their Influence upon our Conduct; and for the same Reason Self-Love should have its Weight in it; there ought to be a just Balance of these self and social Passions; as it would be unnatural for human Beings to divest themes selves of their Humanity, and have no Sympathy with their Neighbours, so it would be an unnatural, (if not more so) to discard their Self-Love, and have no Feeling for themselves.

Since we are as dependant upon our Brother, as he is upon us, why should not these Dependancies be jointly considered by us? And our Reliance upon him, be applied as a Motive for our supporting him? As we have one common Interest, and our private Welfare constitutes a Part of the publick Good, is it not absurd, to consider our Neighbour's Interest abstractedly from our own, or divorce in our Thoughts, what God hath joined together, and which are inseparable in their own Nature?

Hence, it is evident, that these Principles ought to be taken into our Consideration, and one

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one Rule of Conduct formed from their Compolition: Then we shall follow the Course that Resion and Nature dictate; act agreeably to our focial, dependant State; and preferve a due Harmony and Subordination of our Duties. Affections, and Interests in bus build me to

To which I shall only add, that the Principle of Interest is such a necessary Ingredient in every Principle of Virtue, that nothing besides, is sufficient to enforce and support the Practice of Virtue. Should it be alleged, that the Fitness or Propriety of Things, and the Beauty of Virtue, feem to be effective Principles, I alk, what is the Fitness of Things? Is it not derived from their Utility? Is it not fit to provide for ourselves, as well as our Neighbour? And, is it not agreeable to the Fitness of Things, that Virtue should be the Comprehention of every Duty?

Again, what is the Beauty of Virtue? Or, whence doth it arise? Is it of a mere abstracted Nature, calculated only to please the Imagination, and to be admired as a fine Picture? Is it not rather folid and substantial, a Property of of Virtue flowing from its Utility? The first is a mere transient Ornament, or idle Phantom, whose Impression soon vanishes; but the other is permanent, amiable to Reason, and setting to work all the powerful Springs of Action; · We

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We are told, that "The Feet of them who "bring Glad Tidings of Good Things are "beautiful;" the glad Tidings which enliven the Heart, make the Feet of the Messengers beautiful; and the fair and goodly Fruit of Virtue, displayed to our View, reslects a Beauty upon the Tree that bears it; which Fruit being taken away or removed from our Sight, there will remain nothing but the nominal Fitness of the speculative Moralist, or the visionary Charms of the wild Enthusiast.

Thus, there is no Motive sufficient to support and continue the Practice of our Duty, but what is compounded with, or may be resolved into the Principle of Interest.

Upon the Whole, therefore, I conclude, that Self-Interest is a proper Ingredient in every Principle of Virtue.

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We are told, that "The Feet of there wind bring Glad Tidings of Good Things ure headtful," the glad I diags which enlived the Beautiful, and the fair and goodle insit of beautiful; and the fair and goodle insit of Virue, blolayed to our View, reflects a Beauty wood, the Tree, that bears it; which Fent being taken away or throsed from our Sight, there will remain nething but the nominal Fitzance of the meculative plorality or the viscoury acts of the meculative plorality or the viscoury.

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every Vice bath its Alianament, and addressed as with the liberal Office of Pletting or Picture, every Volly both its Pretrained to Wil-

SHALL now consider, in what Sense the Pursuit of Self-Interest is unnatural and vicious; set forth the several Species of a criminal Selfishness, and explain wherein the Force of the Objection lies, — Doth Job fear God for nought?

For which End, it will be necessary to premise, that there is a natural and true Self-Interest, and an unnatural and false Self-Interest.

Our true Self-Interest is, a real and positive Effect, slowing from fixed Causes, or the established Laws of the Deity; who hath instituted certain Means for the Attainment of it.

Will, but frequently distant from our Judg-

ment; though it is a hard Expression, to say, the World is a Cheat, and defigns to impose upon us, vet, at is to difficult to be known, that without great Care and Circumspection, we shall, through its Means, impose upon ourselves; few Things are, what, on the first Appearance they feem to be; many have a fair Surface, and flatter us with a glaring Shew of Good, while they are in themselves real Evils; every Vice hath its Allurement, and addresses us with the liberal Offers of Pleasure or Profit; every Folly hath its Pretentions to Wifdom; our Appetites and Passions are blind Principles, and fo importunate for their Gratification, that if we do not carry a ftrict Hand ever them, they will precipitate us into an Excess, which will prove injurious to us.

We may therefore be eafily deceived, and make a wrong Judgment, both of the Things in which our Interest consists, and of the Meafures to be taken in pursuing it; and from this wrong Judgment, there will arise an imaginary and false Interest; something which hath only the Appearance of Emolument, and is in itself

wholly indifferent or prejudicial to us.

There are not only a Multitude of Objects, concerning which we are liable to err; but as the Deviations from every one of them are infinite, so there may be an infinite Number of erroneous

each particular Object. bus florestell two sales

There are also different Degrees of Good and Evil, from which we may raise to ourselves false Interests, by affixing a wrong Value upon, or making a preposterous Choice of them; as, by preferring the less to the greater Good; or postponing the less to the greater Evil; or, we may more grossly invert the Order of Nature, by postponing real Good to indifferent Things, or both these to real Evil.

From all which erroneous Opinions, we shall be necessarily involved in various Pursuits of a false Self-Interest; some of the principal of them I will set before you for the Explanation of this Subject; and shew in what Sense the Pursuit of Self-Interest is unnatural and vicious.

First then in general, let us suppose a Person indulging his Self-Love, by rashly yielding to the crude Suggestions of his Fancy, Will, or Inclination, without staying to consider their Proposals, or to consult his Reason on the Nature of this Indulgence: Now, if there be a real Self-Interest, and one certain Way to it; if Understanding be given us to explore this Interest, and enlighten us in the Access to it; should we wilfully that our Eyes, and blindly follow such blind Guides as Fancy or Imagination,

tion, it is next to an Impossibility, not to miftake our Interest and the Road to it. Whatever Resolutions a Man may take to please himself, yet, if he steer not the Course which will carry him to this Pleasure, he will act as ridiculously as the Mariner, who being bound to a deftined Port, neglects the Use of the Compais, Rudder, or Pilot, and permits the Ship to take its own Course, or what the Wind and Tide will give it, and expects its Arrival at the defired Haven. It is Infanity to refolve upon enjoying all the Good we can, and not give ourselves any farther Concern, but conclude, that our Refolutions will be fufficient to procure all possible Good for us. Though it may be highly confiftent with all the Rules of Prudence and Duty, to defire and purfue our Interest, yet it is unnatural for an intelligent Being to abandon his Reason; and a shameful Abuse of his Trust, to give a Loose to his Passions, to follow every idle Phantom of Interest; and embrace it with as much Eagerness, as if it had been real, to establish lawless Will as the fole Arbiter of Good, and believe that all the Truth and Nature will conform to it.

Hence it is evident, there may be false Interests, and that the Pursuit of them, is in general unnatural, foolish, and criminal.

But,

But, as the Misapplications of Self-Love may be infinite, so there may be infinite Degrees of Folly and Vice arising from it: These Misapplications likewise, are not only differently soolish and vitious in themselves, or in an absolute Sense, but in a relative Sense, or in the Opinion and Estimation of Mankind; who will concur in passing very different Judgments upon them; and treat the Perverters of Self-Love in a very different Manner: And, as the Description of this different Treatment will greatly contribute to the Illustration of the various Species of a false Self-Interest, it will be proper to exemplify and enlarge upon it:

In the first Place then, some Pursuits of a false Interest are of a private Kind, having their Consequences in a great Measure confined; or at least, generally thought to be confined to those alone who pursue them; whilst others are of a more publick Nature, fentibly affecting all who have any Connections with, or Relations to the Pursuers of them: From these different Consequences, it frequently happens, that the feveral Votaries of false Interests meet with very different Treatment from Mankind, who will judge very favourably of the Errours of fome; make great Allowances for their Frailties, and commiserate their Misfortunes; but be highly incenfed against others a

others; aggravate their Faults; bitterly inveigh against, and reproach them.

A few familiar Instances will set this Subject

in a clear Light:

And first, for the Pursuers of a false Self-Interest, whose Follies are chiefly confined to themselves alone; of this Class are those Persons who set up sensual Pleasures as their principal Good, and place the greatest Enjoyment of Life in the Gratification of corporeal Appetites:

Now this Good may be fought after, either by a moderate or immoderate Indulgence of

these Appetites:

When it is fought after, from a moderate Use of them, then a Choice is made of a real Good, and proper Means are applied for the Attainment of it; but this real Good is of an inferiour and subordinate Nature; and, the Folly of this Sensualist confists in his Neglect of superiour Goods, and a Preference of carnal and fecondary to intellectual and primary Pleasures; or, in subjecting the Understanding to the Senses; considering himself as wholly Appetite; and living only to eat and drink; and thence, acting in the Character more of an irrational than a rational Being: The Height of his Ambition, is to lead the Life of a Brute, and to enjoy its greatest Good; but

but humble as he is, he aspires after more than he can attain; he cannot unman himself without sinking far beneath the animal Creation, and incurring Evils by this vile Degradation, which irrational Beings are Strangers to.

Thus, though it is natural to pursue our Interest, it is Folly to make a preposterous Choice of it, and substitute the Means for the

End of Life.

But the Absurdity and Iniquity of this Judgment will appear stronger, by supposing it to consist in an immoderate Indulgence of these sensual Pleasures:

Here, both the Judgment and Pursuit, are an Abuse of Reason, and of these temporal Goods:

Men may purpose to make the most of Life, but if they take those Measures which will afford the least Use of it, their Resolutions cannot vary the Course of Nature, or transform Evil into Good; but they will change the Course of their own Mind, and vex themselves with miserable Disappointments: If Men will kick against the Pricks, they will naturally goad them; or, if they will drink a poisonous Draught, their Imagination or Intention cannot render it salutary or innocent to them.

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But however dreadful the Effects of the Senfualist's Folly may be, they are chiefly confined to himself; he hath few Partakers in his Miseries; he impairs only his own Senses; drowns only his own Understanding by his frequent Intoxications; the Diftempers which his Intemperance brings upon him, are to himself alone, and he shortens no Life but his own; the Effects of his Extravagance, seldom reach beyond his own Family; and, though he may ill discharge the Office of a Citizen, and be an unworthy Member of the Community; yet, as these Injuries are general, and no particular Person is immediately aggrieved, Mankind are not much offended at, or disposed to resent, them; but many, and especially they who profit by his Profusion, will applaud his Generosity, and look upon him as no One's Enemy but his own:

Thus, though these Judgments and Pursuits of Interests are false, unnatural, and vitious, yet the World in general is so well inclined to

them, as to pity and pardon them.

But however partial they may be to the Perfons who make these wrong Judgments and Pursuits of Interests, they are as much prejudiced against others for making the like Errours, when the Consequences are of a publick Nature; all who are Sufferers through their Folly, Folly, are highly provoked, and in the most opprobrious Manner, charge them with Selfishness, Covetousness, Venality and Corruption, for an injurious Confinement of their own private Interest od vino nas englevan H

Of this Class are they who imagine themfelves unfocial Beings, wholly detached from, and unconnected with their Fellow Creatures: and fet up an absolute independent Self-Interest:

If these Persons be considered only with refpect to themselves, what do they gain by supposing themselves in a State, which they are not placed in? They act against the natural Temper of their Minds; preclude themselves from the Affiftance of their Fellow Creatures, and the Advantages of Society; and feek their Welfare where it is impossible to find it; however felfish therefore they may appear to others, they really injure themfelves drive out their from claffing with the land

If they be considered with respect to others, their Errours will be found to be of a publick Nature; the Interest which they mistake is a common Interest, and their Neighbours are affected by their Conduct: They are not only defective in the Services which they owe to Society, but by abstaining from Acts of Friendship, they commence Hostilities; and such is the Nature of our confederate State, that whatever

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whatever Men may imagine themselves to be, they cannot induce an indifferent Temper; their focial Qualities are so prevalent, that they cannot be suppressed but by their Contraries; Benevolence can only be supplanted by Malevolence: there is no Medium between Friendship and Enmity; the very Force we lay upon ourselves to destroy our Love for our Brother, will quicken a Hatred to him; and if we are not for, we shall be against one another rise und at the sententill or

We are moreover, so intimately united in our external Circumstances, that if we do not concur, we counteract one another; we cannot place ourselves in a neutral or detached State; if our Interests are not coincident, they will be inconfiftent; we shall be Competitors for the same Things, and in this Competition there will be nothing to bound our Defires, or prevent them from clashing with each other's, or thories divide sometimes at well it

Thus, from these Kinds of false Judgments and Pursuits, we raise a Contrariety of Interests: we are distracted within and without: our felf and focial Affections are at variance with one another; and we are led from a Principle of Self-Love, to hate and injure our Neighbour. And remaining very cinhabi A with the Manual of both confloying the first, the

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We are indeed fincere Friends to ourselves; and though we pursue a salse Interest, we are verily persuaded that it is a true one; we mean well to ourselves; and if we do ill, it is owing to our Ignorance, and foreign to our Intention:

But we bear a different Aspect towards our Neighbour; we are his real Enemy; we purposely stifle all Affection, and take Pains to contract an Aversion to him; when therefore he finds us so violent in the Prosecution of our apparent Interest, that no Consideration of Duty, Alliance, or Justice, can restrain us from it, he naturally exclaims against us; accuses our Self-Love of rendering us unsocial to him; and charges us with being too much on our own Side, for being too little on his.

Hence, the Word Selfishness takes its rise; it is always a Term of Reproach; Men are not censured for being self-interested from any true Direction of their Self-Love, or from every salse Direction of it, but from such only which create a Contrariety or Inconsistency of Interests.

Let a Person be highly anxious, or (if I may be allowed the Expression) even covetous of his Welfare; yet, if he makes a right Judgment, and takes proper Measures to attain it, he will be esteemed a Friend to Mankind,

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and applauded for his Regard to himself; or should he take a wrong Course in the Pursuit of his Interest, and it affect none but himself; he will be looked upon as an Object of Compassion; and the World will think him too much wanting to himself, to charge him with an Excess of Self-Love.

But when a Man's Attachment to himself. severs him from the Good of others, and he purposes to serve himself by doing all the Difservice he can to them; then they are exasperated against him, and reproach him with Selfishness, from the inhuman Prosecution of his apparent Welfare: Had their Interests been necessarily inconfishent, such Prosecutions would have been natural; and mutual Recriminations the inevitable Consequence of such an unhappy Situation; but fince there is not any Repugnancy between true and real, but only between false and imaginary Interests; it is not Self-Love, but an erroneous Judgment in this particular Direction of it that engenders Strife, and provokes Men to revile one another; as Men are styled busy Bodies, not for their extraordinary Attention to their own Affairs, but an impertinent Officiousness in interpoling in another's; fo they are termed felfish, not for their too great Care of themselves, but their too little Concern for their Neighbours; whoever

thus mistakes his Interest, may be less or not more folicitous for it, than he who doth not mistake it; but the more oppressive Self-Love is, the deeper Impression it makes upon the oppressed; who, from his own Feelings, meafures the Solicitude of the Oppreffor; which is therefore a Proof, not of the Oppressor's being more anxious for his own Welfare, than others are for theirs; but only of his using more iniquitous Means to acquire it. Albanda salta mon

But to place this Subject in a somewhat different Light; let us suppose a Person considering himself as a dependant Being, but contracting his focial Affections within a narrow Compass, and confining them to his Family; his Relations; or the particular Community of which he is a Member; and renouncing all Connections or Friendship with the rest of his Fellow Creatures: From this narrow Circumscription of Self-Interest, and partial Distribution of his Affections, his Conduct will be very unequal: Where the Rays of his Benevolence reach, they may thine the brighter for being confined within so small a Sphere; there he may give full Scope to his focial Affections; think his Interest identical with that of his Friends, and strive as much to serve them, as himself; who will, therefore, be fo far from upbraiding him of Selfishness, which, that

that they will honour him as their Father, their Patron, or their Patriot:

But to those who are excluded from this fmall Circle he will shew the same malevolent Principles, as the absolutely unsocial Person; and therefore, however he may err in the Excess of Generolity to the former, he will be deemed a Brute by the latter, and condemned as a niggardly felfish Being: Thus, from the directly contrary Deportment to different Persons, the Extremes of two opposite Characters, will be attributed to him; and though on the one Hand he is not so benevolent, nor on the other so malevolent as he is represented; yet he approaches towards either Character, in Proportion to the Extent or Number of his acknowledged Friends; but with any Exclusion, he is not so true a Lover of himself or of Mankind, as the Man who looks upon the whole World as his Country; all his Fellow Creatures as his Relations; and feeks his Welfare from the universal Good of Mankind.

There is another Species of a false Self-Interest, which is of a publick Nature, and deferves to be particularly mentioned, as it will perfect our Explication of this Subject:

The Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life have their special Use and intrinsick Value; which,

which, if Men would make the Standard of their Estimation, their Desires would be just and reasonable; and, as there is a Sufficiency for all, so all would be satisfied; but when these Externals are over-rated, and Fancy or Paffion is the Appraiser; then Mens Cravings are inordinate; Riches become the Bone of Contention, for which they fnarl at and worry one another: From this false Application of Self-Love, they are induced to practife Fraud, Extortion and Violence; and from the View of enriching themselves, endeavour to impoverish their Neighbours; which gives rife to a different Kind of criminal Selfishness, and produces the Charge of Avidity, Sordidness, and Rapaciousness.

Had their private Gain proved no publick Loss; had that which was necessary or convenient for some, been unnecessary or indifferent to all others, then they might have gathered what they pleased without any Offence or Molestation, and however exorbitant their Desires might have been, they would have been confined to themselves, and their Avarice or

Rapacity have paffed uncenfured.

Or, if by fatisfying their own Hunger, they had increased, (instead of diminished) the common Food; and the Loaves, as by the Miracle of seeding the Multitude, had multiplied by eating;

riends and Benefactors to Mankind: no Niggardness of Temper will ever be imputed to him, whose Covetousness is the enriching of the World; but the more he accumulates, the more he will be applauded; and all Complaints turned to the other Side, against any seeming Tardiness in the Prosecution of his Interest; and in this Sense of Good, must the Plalmist be understood, when he saith, "Men will praise thee so long as thou dost good unto thyself."

Hence, it is evident, that it is not the Paffion of Self-Love in general, but the particular Perversion of it to an extravagant Lust after the External Goods of Life, that forms the covetous, and felfish Character.

Lastly, These Externals will be sometimes considered in a relative Sense, and brought into Comparison with the Riches of the Mind; where the less valuable may be preferred to the greater; and Men, from this false Estimation, may set their Veracity, their Honesty and Honour, to sale, for the Goods of Life: they may flatter themselves with receiving more than an Equivalent in Externals; and think it advantageous, to exchange the other for them: But here again, our salse Valuation is of a publick Nature, affecting others, as well

well as ourselves. These internal Goods are focial Qualifications, without which, no Truft can be reposed, no Commerce on Communication carried on, but all the Ends of Society must be defeated . By parting with these therefore, we render ourselves un worthy Members of the Community, and are defective in the Duties we owe to it; we let up a private Interest, detatched from and incompatible with the publick Weal, and strive to serve ourselves by finking the Ship in which we are embarked; acting like the filly Mariner, who stole the Planks from the Sides of the Vessel to strengthen and adorn his own private Cabine As all are Sufferers by fuch Exchanges, it is no Wonder, that they are irritated at our Conduct, and with the utmost Indignation exclaim against it, as an illicit, infamous Traffick; it is for univerfally odious, that every Perfon or Thing, accessary to, or employed in it, is branded with an ignominious Title: The Proftitution of Externals to these Purposes is Corruption; the Goods themselves are Bribes: he who proffers them is stigmatized as the Corruptor; and he, who receives them, as the Corrupted. and star energy while sandard T

It is neither unreasonable, nor selfish, to expect the natural Wages of Industry or Virtue; it is not dishonourable to receive the legal Pay

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for the due Execution of any worthy Employment; "the Labourer is deserving of his " Hire," and he who throws over-board the low-prized Goods to fave the higher, discharges the Office of a faithful Super-Cargo; fuch act by the Rules of Prudence and Justice; their private Interest coincides with the publick Good; and they are Friends to themselves, and to Mankind: But when Men truck with Innocence and Integrity, when they make Merchandise of Honour and Conscience, and barter inestimable Goods for some filthy Lucre, then they drive a most iniquitous and contraband Trade; they refign Things without the Consent, and to the Detriment of those who have a Right in them as well as themselves; and therefore, whatever Ingenuity they may fhew in the Course of this prohibited Commerce, as they have not Sense enough to know their own Interest, nor Honesty sufficient to prevent them from betraying their Trust, it will be condemned, as a low Cunning or a crafty Knavishness, and they will be deservedly deemed lucrative, venal, and mercenary Creatures, da aprison odw. od bus analywwil

There are other various false Interests; but these already mentioned are the general Heads, to which most may be reduced; and are sufficient to shew in what Sense the Pursuit of Self-Interest Self-Interest is unnatural, foolish, and criminal; and for what Reasons Men are stigmatized with the odious Epithets of selfish, fordid, covetous, mercenary, and corrupt.

It only remains, therefore, under this Head, to explain wherein the Force of the Objection

lies, -Doth Job fear God for Nought?

And it is plain from what hath been said, that Job was accused of serving God from a Principle of Interest, inconsistent with true Piety and Virtue; and what that Interest was, appears from the immediately sollowing Sentence, "Hast Thou not made a Hedge about him, and about all that he hath, on every "Side? Thou hast blessed the Works of his "Hands, and his Substance is increased in the "Land; but put forth Thy Hand now and "touch all that he hath, and he will curse "Thee to thy Face."

Satan imputed the seeming Uprightness and Persection of Job, to his slourishing Condition in the World; and the Substance of his Accusation was, that he had made Riches the Idol of his Heart; that all his Adoration was ultimately addressed to them; that he only served God, because He served him with these temporal Things; and, should these be taken from him, he would curse God from the same Principle that he then blessed him. The Devil

did not impeach his Piety, because he worshipped God as his Creator, Governour, and Father; he did not arraign him for seeking his Welfare from an Integrity of Heart, nor for holding fast his Righteousness, because it preserved him free from the Pangs of Guilt, and secured the Testimony of his Conscience:

And in general he was not charged with ferving God for his Interest, but for making a wrong Judgment of it, and placing it wholly on Health, Wealth, and Prosperity; he was not reproached absolutely with his Self-Love, but with perverting it to an immoderate Love of the World; for the Sake of which it was supposed, that he was ready to sacrifice his Piety, Justice, and every other Consideration; and, had this Accusation been true, he would have been justly deemed covetous, venal, and corrupt.

And, the Sequel proved this to be the Whole of the Objection; as, in these Things alone, was his Trial desired or permitted; He was stripped of all his Possessions; deprived almost of all his Family; stricken with a sore Disease; and cast down from the highest Station to the lowest in one Day; all which Afflictions were aggravated by the Importunities of his Wise to curse God; but his Fidelity was inviolable; he triumphed over all Temptations, and blessed his

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his Creator as much " for His taking away, as

" for his giving."

Hence, it is evident, that he did not serve God for these external Things, but for much better, the Health and Wealth of his Mind, the Approbation of his Conscience, and the Joys which he should be admitted into, when Worms had destroyed his Body, and he should see God, and be applauded by Him as a good and faithful Servant.

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flence, at is evident, that he did not ferre God for these external Tange, but for much better, the Health and Vealth of his Mind, the Approbation of his Confidence, and the Joys which he thought be admitted into, when Wormsthad detroyet his Body, and he thould fee God, and be apprayed by Him as a good and fairnful Servant.

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T remains in the last Place, to make such Observations as offer themselves to me from the Discussion of this Subject, and to point out the Uses that are to be made, and the Influence they ought to have upon our Practice is a low a solution of the spottless

The first Observation, I shall make, is, that Ignorance is the original Cause of all Sin.

Ignorance of our Duty is the Cause of an erroneous Conscience; and Ignorance of our Interest, the Cause of a guilty Conscience: Had we an adequate and perfect Knowledge of our Interest, we should have no Temptation to fin: As we are not obliged to serve God or our Neighbour to the absolute Differvice of ourselves, or indeed, for nought, our Duty

and our Interest should concur, and mutually introduce each other.

But when Men make a false Judgment of Virtue, either by preferring secondary and sub-ordinate to primary and absolute Duties, or by substituting indifferent for necessary Things, or by a more gross Inversion of Nature, mistake Good for Evil, and Evil for Good, then they are blind Zealots; and though sincere, the weakest of Brethren; raising our Indignation, while they excite our Pity, by running into all the Madness of Enthusiasm, Superstition, and Methodism.

Again, when we make a wrong Judgment of Interest, it will be necessarily inconsistent with our Duty, and we shall be divided between two opposite Opinions, which will be drawing us contrary Ways; and if these Diftractions do not awaken any Suspicions of a false Judgment, and we persist in our Error, then, as Self-Love is the Master Passion, and over-rules every Principle in the Mind, we shall advance from the Difuse to the Abuse of the Understanding, and the Ignorance of our Intereft to the Violation of our Duty; we shall be obstinate and wilful; harden our Hearts, and fly in the Face of common Sense in one Respect, because we have mistaken it in another, vand be prompted to injure our Neighbour, from Drie

a false Notion of its being an Advantage to ourselves.

Thus Ignorance is the Root of every Vice, whether voluntary or involuntary; let us learn, then, the Value of Wisdom; to confider and shew ourselves Men through the Exertion of our intellectual Faculties; let us spare no Pains in improving ourselves in true moral Wisdom; and endeavour, by all possible Means, to enlighten our Minds with spiritual Truths; " which Wisdom is the principal "Thing, therefore get it, and with all thy " getting get Understanding; it is more pre-" cious than Rubies, and all the Things that "thou canst desire are not to be compared " with it; it is a Tree of Life to them that " lay hold of it, and happy is every one that " retaineth it. It suivalish too , flag at tanky

A fecond Observation is, that as the forming a true Judgment of our Interest is the principal and necessary Thing, so there is, in a natural Sense, but one safe and sure Guide to conduct us to the Knowledge of it.

Though Duty and Interest are in some Respects reciprocal, that is, when we do our Duty we pursue our Interest, and when we pursue our Interest we do our Duty; yet there is a material Difference between them; Duty

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is the natural Means to our Interest, and likewise, to the Knowledge of it.

Our Duty is for the most Part easy to be known, and parallel with the meanest Understanding; but Interest is difficult to be discovered, and almost impossible to be ascertained from itself.

Who can make a complete Estimate of all the feveral Goods of Life, or explore the exact Value which Providence has affigned to each of them? Every Thing around flatters us with the Appearance of Good; Riches, Honour, and Power have their Charms: we are folicited by the Pleasures of Sense and Imagination; and every Affection draws us to its Object: The present Things engross our Attention, and divert us from reflecting on what is past, or descrying the future; our intellectual, like our natural Sight, is finite and short; Objects feem diminished from their Distance; the Good or Evil which lies just before us, appears greater than what is farther off; and while some Things are so remote as to feem confused, others evade our Sight: With all these Imbecilities and Impersections, and among such an infinite Variety of Objects, how is it possible to ascertain their absolute or comparative Value, or form any competent Judgment

Judgment of our Interest from them? In respect, even to Virtue and Vice, if we enter into any particular Disquisition of their several Consequences, we may, perhaps, discover some sew of them, and make a probable Conjecture at others; yet many will be too remote for the Eye of Reason to reach: We are, therefore, far from being Judges sufficient to determine in what special Manner, Time, or Degree, they will dispense their Rewards unto their Votaries.

Hence Interest is such an intricate and complicated Subject, that if we confine ourselves to that alone, and call in no other Assistance, it will be impossible to acquire a sufficient Knowledge of it.

But on the other Hand, all the Duties of common social Life, and indeed most others, are natural, plain, and easy; inscribed in the largest Characters upon our Heart, and conveyed in clear Expressions of Scripture; "The way-" faring Man though a Fool, cannot err "therein;" though void of all other Sense, he is furnished with this let us but ask ourselves what we ought to do, and we have that Oracle within our Breast, which in all ordinary Cases, will not only dictate, but exhort and excite us to the Practice of our Duty.

And however incapable we may be of form-

ing any Judgment of our Interest, by the special Valuation of the several Goods of Life. or by collecting and amaffing all the particular Benefits arising from the Subjects, in which we may suppose it to confist; yet Providence has made an ample Compensation for this Defect of our Understanding, by giving us the ftrongest Assurance of our Interest in our Duty; the Sense of the general Connection of Virtue with Happiness, and Vice with Mifery, is as deeply imprinted upon our Mind, as the Sense of the Obligation to embrace the one and avoid the other; whatever is reasonable, juft, and right, must be good for us; whatever is unreasonable, unjust, and wrong, evil to us: To act as it becometh a Man, and to do what Conscience and Nature distate, must be the Way to a manly and rational Enjoyment of Life; but to act meanly and basely, and pervert the End of our Being, the bigh Road to Mifery : These are felfevident Truths; known as it were by Instinct. and have the Seal of universal Approbation.

We know therefore our Duty, and we know in general, that our Duty is the natural Means to our Interest; this is a fure and infallible Direction, adapted to every Capacity, and common to all Mankind: And, if all would follow it, their Conduct would be regular, and

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there would be as great an Uniformity of Purfuits, as there is an Unanimity of Delire after Happiness; and Men be as perfect as their Nature could admit: But then there is no other Rule; nor is it necessary there should bes fince this alone is fufficient; and it is from leaving this, that there are as many different Opinions and Courses, as there are Ment who have nothing then to direct them, but are driven by the Wind of Fancy, and more or less carried from the Haven where they would be.

As Interest, therefore, and Duty are infeparable by Nature, so should they be in our Mind; and, as that is a proper Ingredient in every Principle of Duty, so this should be always confidered as the necessary and fole Means to our Interest: Though we cannot determine the precise Degrees of Good and Evil that every Virtue and Vice is particularly fraught with, or compute the exact Time when they will be conveyed to us; though we cannot fee how that will be extricated from the Difficulties with which it feems embarraffed, or this have its present Pleasures supplanted by Misery; yet we should impute all these Defects to our own Blindness, and rest upon the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Justice of Providence: being affured that God will find Means, though we cannot; we should trust to our Duty, and

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and from a thorough Contemplation on the Reason and Nature of Things, and a full Conviction of the Divine Attributes, work ourselves into a sirm Persuasion, that Happiness is entailed upon Virtue, and Misery upon Vice.

Thirdly, We are led from the Confideration of these Subjects, to adore the transcendent Goodness of our beneficent Creator, who is so far from impoling any arduous or painful Talk, that He only commands us to do that, which, did we know what was best for ourfelves, would be the Subject of our Inclination and Choice; he only defires us to act agreeably to our Nature, and apply the superiour Talents, with which He hath diftinguished us, to those Points which most nearly concern us; He only expects that we should have an humble Sense of our own Ignorance, and put that implicit Faith and Confidence in Him, which a finite frail Creature ought to place in an infallible, perfect Being; that we should trust in Him for establishing our Happiness in those Things which are most proper; and seek to know, and attain it by those Means alone, which He in His unerring Wisdom, hath been

What other Creator can we defire, than He who hath made us for Happiness, and endowed

DISCOURSES IV. TOT

us with all the Powers necessary to acquire it? What other Father or Governor can we wish for, than He who is the Parent of all Goodness, and hath no other View but the Welfare of all His Subjects? And, had we been our own Legislators, what more falutary or delightful Laws; could we have framed, than what oblige us to take the shortest and surest Way to our Interest? Vice is offensive to the Deity, because it is unnatural and injurious to His Creatures; and He is fo far from defiring us to serve Him for nought, that our Service is most acceptable when we make the best Provision for ourselves; and we disoblige Him most, when we are our own greatest Enemies; He doth not require us to limit or contract his Goodness, by excluding the Application of it to ourselves, or to erect our Piety upon the Ruins of our Self-Love; neither is such a Charity required as may be inconfiftent with our own Happiness; but we ferve God in Spirit and in Truth, when we serve Him as our Guardian and Protector; and we discharge our Duty to our Brother, when we make the Love of ourfelves the Measure of our Love to Him.

The fourth Observation which offers itself is, that since the Service of God is perfect Freedom; since there is an entire Coalition of self and social Affections; since publick and private

private Interest coincide; and Virtue is the only Means to Happiness, and Vice to Misery; there can be no Objection against the Discharge of our Duties to God and our Neighbour, or any Excuse for the Omission of them.

Had the Love of God been Hatred to ourfelves; had our Conformity to the general
Establishment of the World, been contrary to
the Laws of our own private Constitution;
had we been compelled to support the Deity at
the Expence of our own Welfare, or to have
maintained the Dignity of His Throne by debasing or enslaving ourselves, then we might
have complained of the Severity of His Government and Service, and urged Necessity for
our Disobedience!

Had the publick Good been subversive of our private Interest; had our social and self Affections, or the Duties to our Neighbour and ourselves been inconsistent with one another; then we might have insisted upon the weightier Insluence of Self-Love, and from our Compliance with the greater Obligations, justified the Neglect of the less!

Had Temperance destroyed the Health of the Body; had a prudent Moderation of the Passions discomposed the Peace of the Mind; had a rational Conduct been in any Degree productive of Misery; or, had an unlimited Indulgence

Indulgence contributed to our Well-being, then we might have a sealed to the Dictates of Self-Preservation, for giving the Reins to our Passions, and alleged the Danger of being over-wife, or righteous overmuch!

Had we been obliged to renounce all Pleafure, Profit, or Satisfaction in this World; to fuffer the most rigid Mortifications; and to folicit Misery here, for the Sake of Happiness hereaster, then our Plea might have been the Prevalence of Temptations, and the Imbecility of human Nature; and we might have offered in Vindication of our Distrust of Providence in Respect to the next World, our forlorn Situation in this!

Laftly, Had our Duty, or its general Connection with our Welfare, and the Tendency of Vice to Ruin, not been made plain and obvious, then we might have pleaded involuntary Ignorance in the Profecution of an apparent Interest!

But not one of these is our Case; and we are so far from being obliged to serve God to our own Disadvantage, or for nought, that "Godliness is great Gain."

Humanity to others, is Charity to ourfelves; Virtue hath the Promise of this Life, was well as of that which is to come;

and is the natural Means, both to our temporal and eternal Welfare, so that the wise and good Man may join with the Sensualist in the same Resolution, let us enjoy Life: They will only disagree in the Manner of making this Resolution good.

The virtuous Man will enjoy Life by living like a rational Being; acting agreeably to Nature and Truth; feeking after the Pleafures which flow from "Justice, Temperance, Pruse dence, and Fortitude, than which, (both Reason and Scripture assure us) nothing can be more profitable."

While the other will be for making the most of Life, by making the least Use of his Understanding, indulging every idle Fancy and wanton Lust, panting after no other Pleafures but those of Appetite and Passion; the Height of whose Ambition will be, to lead the Life of a Brute.

The last Observation I shall make, is, that it is doing the greatest Prejudice to Religion and Piety, to place them in a disadvantageous or gloomy Light, as averse to Chearfulness and Hilarity, and the Parent of Sorrow and Dejection. Virtue should never be represented as an Enemy to our Interest, or Vice as a Friend to it:

And all such Casuistry should be carefully avoided.

avoided, which pretends to direct our Conduct, where Duty and Interest oppose each other: It is an unnatural and impracticable Idea; should there be any apparent Contrariety between them, it ought always to be resolved, by shewing, either that we have mistaken our Duty, or (which is more frequently the Case,) that it is a false, imaginary Interest, which, if pursued, will be found to be real Misery; that Virtue never fails, sooner or later, to bring its Reward, and if we mark the perfect Man, we shall always find that his End is Peace.

Again, as the Sense of Interest is a proper Ingredient in every Principle of Virtue, and the chief and necessary Support of its Practice; it is sapping the Foundation of all Morality, to advance the Doctrines of an absolute Disinterestedness, or to insist upon the Principle of Benevolence being pure from any Tincture of Self-Love; this is separating what God hath joined together, presuming to be wifer than Providence, stronger than He hath made us, and more virtuous than is required, or possible for us to be.

Let Men be taught to serve God as the Creator and Governor of the World, having no other View than the Good of all his Creatures; to obey His Laws as the Decrees of infinite Wisdom.

Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, by which the Order and Peace of His Kingdom are preserved; let them seek to please Him from the Consciousness of the Advantages which will accrue to them, from a Concurrence with the eternal Source of Reason and Truth, from Whom all Harmony and Happiness issue; and it will never be imputed to them as a Fault, that they do not serve God for nought; neither will their Piety be charged with any finister or selfish Motive.

Let Men be taught to do benign Offices, from the Sense of their reciprocal Dependance, and the Necessity of mutual Support; let them endeavour to succour themfelves, by affifting their Brethren; let them avoid the Imputation of Partiality and Prejudice, by conceiving no Evil, and rejoicing in every Man's Good; let them make their Self-Love act in Concert with their focial Affections; and let them be affured that no Views can be narrow or limited, which comprehend the Good of all Mankind, and are so universal as to extend to every Being, not excepting even themselves; then, if they act upon these Principles, they will never be accused of being mercenary or felfish. Lyeran of the

Let Men be convinced, that internal Worth and Integrity of Mind, are unalienable Goods,

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for which no Equivalent can be had in the external and precarious Gifts of Fortune: And let them place their Interest there; then they cannot be too covetous or ambitious of it; nay, if they sacrifice every other Consideration, and part with the whole World for its Sake, they need not be afraid of being stigmatized as mercenary, venal, corrupt Creatures.

If Men can be brought to feek Peace and Pleasure through a Freedom from Guilt, and the Testimony of a good Conscience, then let them hunger and thirst ever so keenly, indulge these Appetites, and give a free Scope to their Desires; they cannot run into Excess, and there will be no Danger of being overwise,

or righteous overmuch.

Thus, Men should not be diverted from the Pursuit of their Interest, but only instructed how to make a right Judgment of it, and where to place it; the Ways of Virtue should be described, as smooth, easy, and pleasant; and, if any Asperity or Ruggedness should seem to occur in them, they should not be attributed to the Nature of those Ways, but to the Weakness, Ignorance and Frowardness of the Persons who attempt to walk in them: Appetites and Passions are naturally pliant and tractable; the Subjects of the Understanding; and it is the proper Province of a rational

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rational Being to moderate them, which ear be no difficult or irksome Task, except to those who have made it fuch, by their Remissings and Indulgence: The Path of Duty is only steep and arduous to those, who have plunged themfelves into the Depth of Folly and Vice; and to rectify that which hath been for a long Time kept bent, to break off inveterate evil Habits. and to cleanfe the Heart when made a Sink of Iniquity, may be fo extremely hard, as to be aptly compared to a moral impossibility; but these are not natural, but artificial or adventitious Difficulties, and to be charged more upon Vice than Virtue; it is with these Persons only " that Wifdom walketh by crooked Paths, and " bringeth Fear and Dread, and tormenteth Men with her Discipline, until the can " trust their Souls, and try them by her Laws, " and then the will return the Araight Way, and comfort them. But the readily em-" braceth them who feek her early, and openeth all her Stores before them."

In like Manner, the Ways of Sin should always be described like what they are, full of Anxiety, Shame, and Remorfe; and as the Pleasures of Dissipation and Dissoluteness are short and transitory, they should never be considered abstractedly by themselves, nor separated from the Pain and Distraction with

with which they are so closely connected; and the House of Sin should be always represented as the House of Mourning and Misery.

Upon the Whole, then, fince there are no real Objections against Virtue, nor any just Plea for Vice, if Men will act against Truth and against themselves, they must take the Cause and the Effect entirely to themselves; they have nothing to accuse but their own voluntary Ignorance and wilful Obstinacy; if they had consulted Reason or Revelation, they would have found that Virtue leads to Happiness, and Vice is the high Road to Misery; that "Right teousness and Peace have kissed each other; and that the Ways of Virtue are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace."

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DISCOPREE IV.

with which they are so chally conceeded and the Haule of Sin Bouts to always represented earlies white of Mountry and Wildry 1 4 Upon the Whole, then lince there are no nell distance against I state of the city is filled has the True as the time bold in half and against had a felices they are the the the contract of the same the Effect controls to themselves; ducy byen nothing to seem but their own voluntary but norman or the will be the court of they bed winted failed Katha on Keyel and Ther would have toward to Various leader to Adoption to the land is always to strong them " the selection in the selection Finded cloga fortist was a partition, the coops at to want due the Ways of Mirtur are Wassing The land of the first of the second of the the first street with the transfer to the street of

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Abraham, as Perfors of a coarler Testure, and inferious Species to the melices, that statement on

"Nationa of Men, to dwell on all the Pace of

them the Co.32 miliox 873 A of the Centrities; and as the Chellan Religion took its

God bath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, to dwell on all the Face of the Earth.

louist with him in quetioning, "White Cook THEN St. Paul was at Athens, he found an Altar with this extraordinary Inscription, "To the unhe took an Occasion to introduce a Discourse concerning the Deity, and the Nature of Divine Adoration: "Whom ye ignorantly worse thip, declare I unto you; God that made "the World, and all Things therein; feeing " that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth; " dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands; " neither is worshipped with Men's Hands, " as though he needeth any Thing; feeing, " He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all "Things; and hath made of one Blood all " Nations M 3

" Nations of Men, to dwell on all the Face of " the Earth." The Infolence and Pride of the Jews in looking upon all Mankind, except those descended from their Patriarch Abraham, as Persons of a coarser Texture, and inferiour Species to themselves, had drawn on them the Contempt and Odium of the Gentiles; and as the Christian Religion took its Rife from the Jews, and was engrafted on the Molaical Dispensation, it is natural to imagine that firmilar Projudices had been conceived against the Christians, and that the Gentile, who differed from the Jew in all other Respects, joined with him in questioning, "What Good " can come out of Nezoreth?" It is not inprobable therefore, but the Apostle had a View to these Prejudices, when he intimated, that both by natural, and revealed Religion, all Mankind are confidered as Fellow-Creatures, as Brethren, and Sons of the fame common Father; but whatever the Apostle's Intention might have been, the Truth conveyed in these Words, remains the same; I shall consider them, therefore, as an independent Proposition, dividing itself into two Parts : First, the doctrinal Part, "God hath made of one Blood " as though he need sneM To enoits W "

And the second, the End, for which they were made, "to dwell on all the Page of the Barth."

Both

Both these I will enlarge upon, by explaining the first, and inferring and enforcing the Duties implied in the datter, i warn starming A lo-

First then, " God hath made of one Blood all Mations of Men in di beligrai alned resis

The obvious Construction of these Words. is, that all Men are of the fame Extraction. and descended from the same original Parents; though they may live in different Countries, speak different Languages, wear different Complexions, and observe different Laws, Customs, and Religions, yet they are all of the fame Rank of Beings, equally related to the common Father of the Universe; and derive their Pedigree from the same Stock; they are all of the House and Lineage of Adam; and consequently Brethren by Confanguinity.

And they are not only Brethren by Confanguinity, but also by their Birthright; there is the same natural Inheritance to all, as Coheirs of the fame Privileges, subject to the fame Infirmities; and equally bound by the fame Laws of Mortality; their Bodies are alike frail Substances; compounded of the fame Materials, and fashioned in the same Manner: all are obnoxious to Hunger and Thirst, Heat and Cold; the fame Tribe of Discases, and the same precarious Conditions sno:

of Life and Death are entailed upon all.

Nor

Nor is this the whole Meaning of these Words, it is too indeterminate, as every Species of Animals may in almost all these Respects be faid to be of " one Blood;" there is still a farther Sense implied in them; "God hath made all Nations of Men," in an emphatical, and peculiar Manner, " of one Blood:" He hath made them one Family; incorporated them in one Society; constituted them Members of the fame Body, and diftinguished them, above all other Creatures, as Fellow-Citizens of the and I believer yet they are the of siblows

There is in most Animals some Indication of a focial Disposition: The most solitary and favage Beafts are drawn by a strong Tie of Nature to love and cherish their Young, for a Season; they retain a long Time some Affection for those they are bred up with and at certain Intervals have a Communication with those of their own Species.

Some Creatures, also, though no Ways formed for mutual Affistance, yet are impelled by common Fears, or attracted by natural Affection, to affociate with one another, ale one

Again, there are other Animals, made for Society; who live and work together; whose Offices and Employments are executed by the united Communion of their Powers; who have one publick Stock, which all jointly contri-

bute

bute to, and equally partake of; and every private Interest is included in, and constitutes a Part of the general Weal. But Men have still more large and eminent Preparations for Society than all these; and are by far the most social of Beings; as their reciprocal Dependancies are greater; their Connections stronger; their Wants more numerous; and they are not only invested with all the social Qualifications of other Creatures in a superiour Degree, but distinguished with others, through which human Society is capable of more exalted Improvement, and may be carried to an infinitely higher Point of Persection.

There is no Creature so helpless in its State of Infancy, or of so long a Continuance in it, as Man; the first Things he is sensible of, are his own Weakness, and the Alacrity of those around him to assist him: As soon as he knows where he is, he finds himself amidst Friends, who, without any previous Favour, or suture Prospect, entertain the warmest Affection, and consider his Welfare as their Happiness: And when he comes out from the Hands of his Parents, he is still insufficient of himself; and subject to innumerable Wants, which his own Diligence, without extraneous Assistance, can never redress: Though our beneficent Creator hath

bath amply provided for Mankind, when all care for the Good of all; and each feeks his own Welfare in his Neighbour's; yet there would be strange Deficiencies, was every Indiwidual to look to himself alone, and not communicate his own Labours, nor partake of the Fruits of others, Man, in every Period, and Situation of Life, is imperfect by himfelf; when mature in Strength, he is green in Understanding, and requires the Counsels of Age and Experience, when advanced in Years, he wants the Vigour of Youth, to execute the Defigns of his riper Judgment; till at length he approaches towards a fecond Childhood, and is as helpless in the latter End of his Journey, as he was at the Beginning, and needs Affiftance from those, to whom he gave it. Thus every State of Life hath some Defect; each Individual is incomplete alone, and must be continually obliged to his Fellow-Creatures, for their Support. And as Men are more dependant on one another in their external Circumstances, so are they more intimately united in their Minds than other Creatures: Where are fuch ftrong benevolent Affections towards the whole Species, fuch general tender Sympathies, as in the human Breast? None have, like them, such Fellow-Feelings, or can be styled Fellow-Members of the same Body: disti

Body: A humane Heart will be fenfibly touched even at the Relation of the Injuries, and Distresses of its Fellow-Creatures, however diffant in Times of Place, las if it was la principal Sufferer in them; and moved with Indignation at the Oppressor, as if he was its own particular Enemy; The external Form, and Figure, andy, even the Understanding itself, is not a more diffinguishing Characteristick of a Man, than a generous, benign Temper; for which Reafon, Humanity, which imports our Nature, always conveys the Idea of Tendernefs and Compassion; these, being the effential Parts of our Conflictution, are by an easy Metaphor placed for the Whole; whoever hath divefted himfelf of an humane Heart, and high no Bowels of Compassion for his Neighbour, feems to partake more of the brutal, than the human Nature: Hardness of Heart, is far more deplorable, than Softness of Head; the Want of Common Sense is, for the most Part, a natural Infirmity, but every one hath fome Share of common focial Affection; and if we forfeit our Benevolence, and become unfeeling to the Calamities of others, it is an Infentibility of our own contracting, and a wilful Abuse of our Nature.

And Men have not only all the common focial Qualifications in a superiour Degree, but

are dignified with others, peculiar to themselves, as rational, moral Beings; they are endowed with the Powers of Thought; Reason and Reflection, Freedom of Will, and Liberty of Action; furprizing Amplifications of their focial State! Through these intellectual Powers, they can contemplate their natural State; lenter into voluntary Engagements, and artificial Affociations for enlarging and frengthening it; form civil Inflitutions, subordinate and subservient to the general Community of Mankind; and be more closely united by contracted Friendships, pontaneous Alliances, domestick Connections, and private Ties !- What a Variety of mental and corporeal Exercises for the Improvement of the focial State do these inventive Faculties supply Men with !- All other Creatures are forced by Instinct, or led by Nature, to the Performance of the Offices of their Station; they want neither Precept, nor Practice; their Path is described before them, which they invariably and inceffantly purfue: Though the Ant hath no visible Guide, Overseer, or Ruler, the is conscious of the approaching Winter; and, conducted by Providence, accumulates Food in the Harvest: In like Manner, the Knowledge of all other Animals, as far as is necessary for the Preservation of themselves, and

and their Species, comes, as it were, by Inspiration, and is at once intuitive and complete; they have no Occasion to communicate it to one another, or transmit it to Posterity, to preserve and augment it; but every Individual is equally and fully possessed of it; and each succeeding Generation rifes as perfect as the former: In these Respects, therefore, they are independent of one another, and incapable of any Advancement: when any with mild; and

But only the Seeds of Knowledge are fown in the human Mind; which have their gradual Increase, and produce their Fruit according to the Soil in which they have been scattered, and the Affiduity exerted in rearing them; our natural Disposition must be trained and cultivated by Diligence; we must collect our Knowledge from Application, Instruction, and Example; from these Sources the learned Professions of Divinity, Law, and Physick, take their Rife; hence fpring all the liberal Arts and Sciences, which civilize, improve, and adorn human Nature: The Rudiments of all Erudition must be first laid in the Individual; where they must be built upon; and even then would fall and perish, were not the whole Basis, and its Superstructure, conveyed to others; who likewife must superadd and advance them, before they can attain to Perfection; all which Circum-**Rances**

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stances plainly demonstrate the intimate Relations and Connections, not only of the Coremporaries of Mankind, but of fuccessive Generations upon one anothersunant no resistent and

Again, Every other focial or folitary Animal continues in the fame State he was placed in. which will not in general admit of any Variation; their Necessaries of Life lie within a narrow Compais; are near, and prepared for them: But Men are only provided with the Principles of Society; which they must improve and complete; the Substance of their Sustenance is bestowed in its rude State; the collecting, working, and preparing of which, even for the Use of one, or a few Persons, demand a Multiplicity of Hands, much Time, and painful Industry; all which external Neceffities, and internal Preparations, have given Rife to every mechanical Art, and manual Occupation; to all the extensive Branches of Merchandise and Commerce; Husbandry and Agriculture; which are manifest Indications of our reciprocal Dependancies. The Redundance and Deficiency of Minerals, Vegetai bles, Fruits, and Materials of Manufactures, proper for our Use, in different Countries, dblige us to expand a Communication, and forcad our Commerce over the Face of the whole Earth, that the Conveniencies and Elegancies Mances

of Life may circulate; Nature's Bounties be diffused, and conveyed to remote Regions; and that the most distant Members of this universal Society may recognize, correspond, and be furnished with Occasions for the Display of Justice, Humanity, and all social Virtues, with one another.

And laftly, The noble Privilege of Speech, with which Man alone, of all the visible Creation, is endowed, diftinguishes him as the most focial of Beings, and confirms all that both been advanced on this Subject; being in an especial Manner adapted to all the Enlargements, which our intellectual Endowments give to focial Life; and without which, all the other Advantages would in a great Meature be loft: The infinitely various Calamities and Infirmities, peculiarly incident to Mankind; with their entire Dependancies, and necessary Applications, for immediate Relief, require this prompt Signal of Diffress, to specify their Wants, and expedite Affiftance; which was principally conferred upon them on that Account; and is the necessary Accomplishment of a communicative, rational Being. The articulate Ufe of the Tongue is no less necessary for supporting a general Correspondence, and facilitating their mutual Commerce. The Publication of their Thoughts, or pouring out their Hearts to one ".dim I manother, Shell I

another, through this oral Vehicle, affords a pleafing Satisfaction; it multiplies Joy, and divides Sorrow Conversation is the most rational and social Entertainment; it breeds Familiarity and Friendship; and is the most effectual Means for uniting and meliorating Mankind. This noble Talent of Speech, this choice Gift of Nature, gave Birth to the Invention and Composition of Letters, the descriptive Characters of articulate Sounds; and thence to Reading, Writing, and Printing; through which aftonishing Attainments of our rational Nature, the faithful Records of antient and modern, facred and prophane History; the Principles and Proficiencies in every Art and Science; the Doctrines, both of natural and revealed Religion, are transmitted from Generation to Generation; and Posterity inherit all the Sapience and Erudition of their Ancestors.

From all which Confiderations it is manifest, that "God hath made of one Blood, all Na"tions of Men," and characterized them, as focial Beings, by inspiring them with the Spirit of Benevolence, forming among them manifold reciprocal Dependancies, Connections, and Relations, incorporating them into one Society, and endowing them with all the mental and corpor-al Qualifications, necessary to dwell in Love and Unity on all the Face of the Earth."

Here we may fafely rest our Cause; but fince this Subject is of to great Importance as not only to justify, but even demand every collateral Argument, that can be produced for its Confirmation, I will turn from these direct and politive Proofs, and view the Subject in a different Light, by confidering what the Confequences will be, of a contrary Hypothesis; or, in supposing Men, made of one Blood, with Regard to their Genealogy and Confanguinity, but in all other Respects uncon-nected, independent, unsocial Beings: For which Purpose I will consider them as having no mutual Intercourse or Communication; but imagine each Individual endeavouring to provide for himself, without any Exchange of Labour, or communicating Affiftance to, or deriving any from, his Fellow-Creatures:-In what a forlorn and wretched Situation doth he immediately appear to be! Those Creatures which are placed in an independent, unconnected Situation, are peculiarly adapted to it; their Wants are few, and easily supplied; Providence hath clothed them against the Weather, and prepared Food and Habitation for them; they are of a rapacious, favage Nature; felf-pleafed, and felf-fufficient; averfe to Society, and affecting Solitude: But how widely different

different is the State of Man! - How manifold are bu Wants ! - How few, even of the Necessaries of Life can he procure, in any comfortable Manner, for himself! Naked came be into the World, and naked would be have continued in it, had he no other Garment but what his own Hands could make I The Sheep would offer its Wool; the Worm its Silk; the Earth, Flax Hemp, and Coto ton in vain, had be no Aid to card, spin, weave, and manufacture thefe Materials for his Ufe :- In like Manner, what the Son of God Taid of himself in his deserted perfecuted State, would be applicable to all Men in this uncommunicative unlocial Condition. The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air. baye Nests, but the Son of Man bath not where to lay bis Head: No Individual can bring Trees from the Wood, or Stone from the Quarry, and erect an Edifice fit for himfelf to inhabit, How ill, likewife, would he be provided with Food! Instead of having his Table adorned with the Elegancies that Commeses can furnish him with, from all Parts of the Globe, he would be scarce able to procure Necessaries Water, indeed, he might have in common with other Cteatures, but how would he get Bread to it d. Though Nature should continue to open all her Stores be-

fore

fore him, yet had he no extraneous Affiftance to gather and prepare them for his Reception, he would flarve in the Midfle of Plenty. Nor is this the world that would enfue? had we no Preparation for a facial State; either from our internal or external Conftitue tion, and yet lived together, it would be fortunate for us to have no farther Communication, though we might fer out as neutral Neighbours, we should not long continue such a Common Warts would lead us to the Purfuit of the lame Things, and, as there would be nothing to adjust our feveral Claims in this Comperition, our detached Interests would frequently classes and the Goods of Life become the Bone of Contention, for which we should injure and warry one another; if we were not for, we should be against one another there can be no Medium between Love and Hatred if we were not the most focial, we should be the most unfecial of all Beings; the most desperate Enemies we could meet with would be those of our Pellow Creatures, and every one would pray to have the Mark of Cain let upon him that whoever should find bim might not kill bim.

And in the last Place, let us suppose Men, not only removed from the Affiliance, but the Signature one another: This foliatry State would sub-correspond with the human Mind; the N 2 World

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World would appear as a defolate Country to Man, and he would think himself lost and bewildered in it; the Curse denounced against Cain, would be entailed upon bim, and he would appear to himself a Fugitive and Vagabond upon Earth, and his Punishment be greater than be could bear ! Why should he be endowed with the Organs, and Use of Speech ? To what Purpole should he cry aloud for Help, were none to hear him? Eyes without Light could not be more useless, than the Power of communicating our Thoughts without any Object to receive them. Whereto would ferve benevolent Affections, or 2 Heart tuned for Concert, if no one could join with it?, We could not then but confider ourselves as Limbs torn from the Body; or, mishapen and monstrous Productions of Nature; where many Things would be fuperfluous, many more wanting; and we should be neither adapted to our State, nor our State to us; for that if we were driven, like Nebubadnezzar, to effociate with the Beafts of the Field, it would be happy for us to be (like him) invested with their Form, and naturalized to And in the last Place, let unoitioned hind

Thus, in whatever Light we fet this Subject, Truth, which is always confident, appears the fame; and both the direct Model

and positive Arguments, and the palpable Abfurdities arifing from the contrary Supposition concur to prove, that " God hath made " of one Blood all Nations of Men," in the Sense before explained, or that He hath made them not only Brethren by Confanguinity, or as being the Sons of Adam and Eve, but united them by close Connections, reciprocal Dependancies, focial Affections, powerful Sympathies, and a complete Coalition of all external and internal Interests. They are therefore so much " of one Blood," that they are Members of the same Body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that, which every Joint Supplieth, where Benevolence is the vital Principle, or animal Spirit, that enlivens every Part, invigorates, and fupports the whole System.

and politive Arguments, and the palpable Abfurdition triting from the contrary Suppolition concert to prove, that " God hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men," in the Senie before explained, or that He hath made their not only Brethren by Confangoinly, on he being the fone of Akon and Rest but united them by close Connections, reciprocal Dependancies, rocial Affections, powoutil Symputhies, and a geomplete Coulings of all external and internal Interests. They are therefore to much be of one Blood," that they are Mempers of the fame Body, July joined together, and compathed by river, which every Joseph inpolicity, where Bearmoleuss is the viral Principles or without Spirit, that collisons every Part, lovegorates, and supports the whole & them.

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Manner, that they thould be of a civil, cent-

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Interiouray benign and friendly to Equals; retpective and fubralfive to Superiours. — In this Wanner, are Men to live I with one

trons Department; Audions in obliging, and

another on the Rarch charles Pehaviour is

kend, from one Pole of the Globe to the other;
A human Pace implies a humane Heart, and
demands humane Treatment from every Fel-

AVING explained at large the Sense of these Words, "God hath made "of one Blood all Nations of Men;" it remains now to describe and enforce the Duties implied in these Expressions, to dwell on all the Face of the Earth."

Since then, by being "made of one Blood" is meant, that Men are formed and fashioned alike; descended from the same original Parents, made dependent upon, and obliged to assist one another; that their Interests are united; that they breathe a benevolent Spirit, and are distinguished above all others, as conversable and communicative Beings; it follows, that their Creator designed them to live as Fellow-Creatures, as Friends, Relations, and Brethren, in a social, and amicable N 4

Manner; that they should be of a civil, courteous Deportment; studious in obliging, and taking a Pleasure in pleasing; honouring all Men; affable, condescending, and generous to Inferiours; benign and friendly to Equals; respectful and submiffive to Superiours. - In this Manner are Men to live with one another on the Earth; this Behaviour is not partial or local, but required of all Mankind, from one Pole of the Globe to the other; A human Face implies a humane Heart, and demands humane Treatment from every Fellow-Creature. There is, in most Persons, a strong Prepossession, or inherent Partiality, towards their native Country, which feems to be founded on the Principles of Philanthropy, and if not merely local, or so contracted as to create an Antipathy or Aversion to other Places or Perfons, hath fomething generous in it; but the more the Idea of this Country be enlarged, the more noble will the Preposection be : - He, hath formed, indeed, a very narrow Notion of it, who confines it to the Precincts of the Hamlet or Parish where he was born; every Man's Engagements and Connections must extend the Circle of his Acquaintance, (if he has lived any Time in the World,) beyond these Bounds, and give at least the County or Province where he refides, some Part of his Affections: · to hirld

fections: And a little farther Confideration and Experience of the World will expand a wider View to him, and convince him, that the Inhabitants of many different Counties or Provinces are Members of the same civil Community, or Body politick, united under the same Head, and subjected to the same municipal Laws, for their common Security and Defence; all these, then, will be taken into the Number of his Friends; he will acknowledge them as his Brethren, and esteem his national Title, as themore honourable Mark of Distinction.

And why should we stop bere? May not our Prospect still receive an additional Enlargement? May we not have more distant Connections? May not the Inhabitants, who are only separated from us by a Mountain, a River, or an Arm of the Sea, formed in the same Manner, and alike the Sons of Adam and Eve, be confidered as our Brethren? Do we not carry on a Correspondence, and support a Commerce with them? Do we not enter into Treaties and Alliances, for our reciprocal Defence, and exchange Manufactures and Merchandize, to our mutual Advantage? Why, then, should these be excluded from being our Friends, and our Countrymen? Why should a few Leagues of Earth, or Water, deprive them, or us, of this Privilege, or diffolve the Relation subfifting between

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between us? And again, as Men do not forfeit their Humanity, or are less related by being
remote from one another, why should not the
most distant Parts, even our Antipodes, be included in the Idea of the same Country? Why
should not the whole Earth be looked upon
as our native Soil, and all its Inhabitants as
our Brethren?

But it may be objected, that the Dwellers in different Regions live under different Governments, have different Laws, Customs, and Languages: The Objection is admitted, but proves nothing: Notwithstanding these Differences, they may be all Fellow-Countrymen: Different Persons may be Members of different less, or subordinate Communities, and yet united in the greater, or principal Society: They who belong to different Corporations, Companies, or Cities, are Subjects of the same national Community: In like Manner, they who belong to different national Communities, may be Members of one universal Society, containing all Kingdoms and Countries, and composed of the whole Race of Mankind.

This large, aggregate, collective Body of the human Species, is, truly and properly, a Society; having not only the common, effential Properties, but some peculiar Characteristicks, which distinguish it as such, and give

it the Pre-eminence to all others: As first, all its Parts, in common with all other Societies, are united; they have their internal and external Links, rivetted by social Affections: Though they utter different Tongues, yet their Hearts all speak the same Language: They have also reciprocal Dependancies, and an Union of Interests: The private Good of each Individual constitutes a Part of, one general Publick Weal.

Again, the Members of this universal Society of Mankind are Fellow-Subjects under the same Head, or sole Monarch of the World; Who enacted the Laws of Justice, Humanity, and Benevolence, the original Institutes of their Constitution; which, all are equally subject to, and bound to obey: These are established, publick, Supreme Laws; in Comparison of which, all other political Ordinances are but private Articles, or local Statutes, deriving their Authority from, entirely dependent upon, and subservient to, them.

The smaller Classes or Collections of People, such as Clubs, Companies, Colleges, or Corporations, are Societies within a Society; where less Circles are contained in, and supported by the greater; and consequently their Rules or Orders must coincide with, or at least not contradict or interfere with, the Laws or Rules

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of the greater, as they are of an inferiour and subordinate Nature. In like Manner all Kinds of Civil Polity, fuch as Republicks, Aristocraeies, Monarchies, or any of their Compounds, are but less Associations, or Companies, contained within the general Community of Mankind; whose Injunctions are Bye-Laws, of a private and fecondary Intention; refembling Shoots isking from the same Stock, and deriving their Life and Vigour from it; and therefore they can be neither heterogeneous to their Root, nor contrary to their Fellow-Branches; or rather they are particular Transcripts or Extracts from the general Law of human Nature, applicable to the special Exigencies of particular Seafons and Places, which the Inhabitants, by a voluntary Compact, have agreed to publish and support, by accessory Rewards and Punishments. The fundamental Laws of human Nature contain all other, extend to every possible Season or Circumstance; and not only comprehend the Decrees of each diffinct Community, but likewise the Rules, which bind different Kingdoms, and their refpective Members, in their Transactions with one another; the feveral Species of this general Law of human Society, are diftinguished by various Denominations : biomico firm ambito

That Part of it which binds different King-doms,

doms, in their Treaties or Negotiations, is termed the Law of Nations:

That, which directs belligerent Persons, or Powers, in a State of Self-Defence, is the Law of War.

That, which is obligatory upon Merchants or Traders, is the Law of Commerce, or commutative Justice.

That, which is appropriated to Members of the same Community, is stiled municipal, or provincial Law.

There are various other Branches of this universal civil Law; which compose one Body; and contain all focial Infliences; as, strictly speaking, there is no other; whatever is duly enacted by any legislative Power, pre-existed in this Law of human Nature, and derives its Obligations from it: The Magistrate cannot create new Laws; he only revives, promulges, and enforces the old : If any municipal or provincial Laws be foreign to this general civil Law, they are arbitrary, the Decrees of Ignorance and Caprice, without any intrinfick Merit, or Validity; and can only be Supported by despotick Power; and should they clash with, or oppose it, they are abfolutely null and void; and all Observance of them will be Injustice to Mankind, a Violation of the Laws of Humanity, and Disobedience

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Laftly, the Authority of the Civil Magnifrate, even in lenforcing this most comprehensive Law, is local, and confined within certain preferibed Limits; beyond which another Establishment takes Place, and hath its Boundary of Power; so that the same Person, by removing from one District to another, may vary his Allegiance, be freed from the Authority of the one, and subject to the Jurisdiction of the other; but the Laws of human Society are unlimited:

No Member can be an Outlaw, or unmaturalized to them; he is entitled to their Protection, and obnexious to their Penalties, in every Part of the Globe; nay, could Menconvey themselves to the Moon, or any other Planer, they would carry these Laws, and their Obligations with them.

vernment, and are bound by the fame Laws, wherever we are, or in whatever Society we engage; it follows that we are all Fellow-Citizens, Fellow-Bubjects, Neighbours, Priends, and Breibren: The true Love of our Country is the Love of Mankind; the Promotion of their Good, univerfal Patriotifm.

Neighbour, He did not bound this Relation by

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any Vicinity of Place: He did not confine it to the next-door Inhabitant, or to the fame Trible or Nation: A certain Man (lays He, but whether Jew, Arabian, or Egyptian, is uncertain, and left operatin on Purpole, that we may suppose him to be either.) travelling from ferufalem to fericho, fell among Thickes was ftripped wounded, and left half dead; by Chance a Samaritan came that Way, who feeing him lie in this deplorable Condition, did not fray to examine of what Country he was: what Religion he professed; what Substance he had, or what Recompence he could make him; his tender sympathizing Temper suppressed all these Enquiries, and Distinctions; he saw him weltering in his Blood, and fuffering as a Man ; as one of like Realings with himfelf; he wanted no other Shibboleth ; his Heart bled for him and he hastened to relieve him a treating him in every Respect as he himself could have withed to have been used, in the same dreadful d'Situation : This compassionate Traveller, (sve are told) was his Neighbour, or acted as a Neighbour by him; on as any Man (of whatever Designation, Religion, or Country dies may belt isobound toridocunto every Stranger libri theoliko Diffresod Ally Menujaro Neighbours by Nature, but the good Samaritan partially

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displayed as a Specimen of the Humanity, Priendship, and Hespitality, due from every human Being to his Fellow-Creature.

Again, Though the Term Relation is seldom carried beyond the third or fourth Remove in collateral Branches from the fame Ancestors, yet this is only a special, or spurious Acceptation of ir: Whoever confines his Idea of Confanguinity within flich narrow Limits, hath conceived a very mean and contracted Sentiment of it; " God hath made of one Blood all Na-"tions of Men, to dwell, as Brefbren, on the is Face of the Earth:" there is a natural and necessary Relation sublisting between them, which no Custom can superfede, no Number of Descents erase, no voluntary Alliances or Affi-nisies disannul; but which is transmitted and continued throughout all Generations: Whatconfirm but cannot diminish or weaken it: Parental, conjugat, and filial Affection, in their common received Sense, and when duly adjusted? are to far from suppressing, that they cherish an bumane, benevolent Disposition : Whoever fuffers any of these to absorb the rest, acts as iniquitoully as he who despoils Millions of his Fellow-Creatures to enrich a few poor as partially

partially as if the Sun cast all its Rays on the nearest Spot of Earth, and excluded all other Parts from its Light and Heat, 1000 to it of the

And as no Diftance of Place, in Refpect to our Refidence, or Degrees of Descents in our Genealogy, can diffolve the natural Tie that is formed between us, so no Inconsistency of Conduct in another, can exempt us from the Duties arising from it: " God hath made Men " of one Blood," and appointed them to live together, as Members of the fame Family: No one can relinquish his Post, or exonerate himfelf of this Charge; all are obliged to do Good to their Brother, not because he hath first done Good to them; this would have been natural and grateful, had he not been allied to them; neither are they to ferve him, that he may return the Favour, this would have been prudent and politick, had he been their avowed Enemy: But they ought to confult his Interest, because he is their Brother, and exclusively of every other Confideration; and therefere they should behave as Friends to him, though he may act as a Foe to them; his Actions cannot determine his Relation to them; he still continues their Brother; and cannot abdicate his Manbood, though he may cease to act as a Man; and their Duties must continue with it; the Neglect on his Part cannot releafe How

ALO DASCOURSE VI

lease them from the Discharge of their Part to hims the Confequence would be fatal to Society, if it could as an Injury, then, having been once received, or imagined to be recoived, the Revaliation and Repetition of it. would be even justified, and Contention never coale , without any Fault but of the helt Aggresson and thus, every Relation, upon the least trivial Provocation, would be diffolved, and the most focial and friendly of all Beings incontinently fall sinto a State of perpetual Wat, and implacable Enthity: Revenge and Retaliation of Inferries, therefore must be unlawful, every Society, from the Principle of Solf-Prefervation, must be invested with the Power of preventing the Continuance, as well as the Beginning of Strife: The Laws of Hismanity and Benevolence must bind at all Scafons, and in all Circumstances : And Forbearance and Forgiveness must be Duties incumbent on each Individual, whatever Indignities he-may have redeived, or however defective his Brother may have been in his Behaviour towards him hou

Lastly, since Mankind are the most social, conversable, and reciprocally dependent of all Beings; destitute and forlorn, abstracted from Society; and complete and perfect, placed in it; it is their Interest, as well as their Duty, to affociate in an amicable Manner:

Well

Well might our Saviour fay, " My Yoke is " easy, and my Burthen light," when our Duties to our Brother, are Favours to outselves; and nothing more is required from us, than the true Purfait of our own Happinest; it is right, because it is best for us " to do as we " would be done unto :" Where is the Difficulty of " loving our Neighbour as ourselves," when he constitutes a Part of ourselves, and his Good includes our own? Why should it be thought a hard Injunction "to love our "Enemies," when it will be the most effectual Measure to divert their Malice, and fecure outfelves? Affability, and Generofity, Goodnature, and Good-manners, are not only the proper Embellishments of a focial Being, but the most interesting Qualities to the Individual, and the Support of every private Welfare ! The Members of the political Body of Mankind, refemble the Members of each natural Body; there is a general Communion and Participation of Interests: Whatever is beneficial or injurious to any one Part, affects every other, or the Whole, in the same Manner: As Individuals, we cannot avoid loving our felves; and as focial Beings, we are obliged to love one another; this natural and moral Necessity should concur, it is our Province to make them; and for that Purpose we should proceed 0 2 Other

on the Supposition of an Union and Consent of Interest. Absolute, difinterested Principles, feem to have fomething noble and fublime in them; and some speculative Persons have amused themselves with Systems of pure Benevolence, unadulterated with the least Tincture of Self-Love; but these are mere visionary Schemes; the Reveries of wild Enthulialts; impracticable and abfurd; I will dare to affert, that where focial Principles are duly compounded with, and supported by the Motives of Self-Interest, the Performance of all the Duties of Humanity will not only be better fecured, but the Composition will be rational in itfelf, and agreeable to the Constitution of human Nature: His Views will be least contracted, or most extensive, whose Circle comprehends the whole World, not excluding even his own Person: And he must attain to the highest Perfection in Goodness; who discharges his Duty to all Mankind, and is not wanting in his Duty to himfelf.

Thus, it is evident that Generofity is a true, and Selfiskness, (as contrasted with it) a false Pursuit of Self-Interest: Let us learn, therefore, prompted both by our Duty and our Interest, to live together in Unity, and seek our own Good in our Neighbour's: Since we are of "one Blood," let us be of one Heart, and

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one Mind; so shall we answer the Purposes of our Creator, in "dwelling on all the Face of "the Earth," and enjoy all the Blessings this World can afford, with the warm Hopes of

eternal Happiness in the next.

And, may the God of Peace, the supreme Head and Father of this great Family, who hath sown in the Minds of all it's Members, the Seeds of Humanity and Benevolence, prosper our Care and Culture of them; give us a plentiful Increase; and bless us with an Abundance of their Fruit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

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ent Minds, id shall we animor, the Pine of the Man of the Day of the Day Parties, and choose of the Birdings ship World, one a Seat a well also warm Diapes of chemal Happeness in the acute.

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Shall I fall down to the Stock of a Tree?

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DISCOURSE VI.

as on their carred Langes, "They lovelle Gold" out of the Engy and weigh Silger to the line the

Isaiah xlvi. 8.

Remember this, and shew yourselves
Men, bring it again to Mind, O ye
Transgressors!

HE Idolatries of the People of Ifrael are the Subject of the two preceding Chapters; the Lord, by His Prophet Ifaiab, exclaims against their Folly, in worshipping Images: and expostulates with them in these Words: " They take Part of a Tree for Fuel, to warm " themselves, and the other Part they make their God, even their graven Image, they fall down and worship it, and pray unto it, 4s and fay, Deliver me, for thou art my God: " None confidereth in his Heart, neither is st there Knowledge or Understanding, to say, I " have burned Part of it in the Fire, I have 46 baked Bread upon the Coals thereof; and " shall I make the Residue an Abomination? " Shall

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" Shall I fall down to the Stock of a Tree?

" Remember these, O Jacob and Ifrael!"

And, in the xivith Chapter, He reasons with them after the same Manner on their molten, as on their carved Images, " They lavish Gold " out of the Bag, and weigh Silver in the Ba-" lance, and hire a Goldsmith, and he maketh " it a God; they fall down, yea, they wor-" ship; they bear him upon their Shoulders, " they fet him in his Place, and he standeth; " from his Place shall he not remove; yea, " one shall cry unto him, yet can he not an-" fwer, nor fave him out of his Trouble: Re-

" member this, and shew yourselves Men; bring

" it again to Mind, O ye Transgressors!"

That is, consider with yourselves, that, what you have fet up for your God, is mere fenfeless Matter, incapable of hearing your Prayers, or redrefting your Wants; the whole Process, from the Beginning to the End of this Apotheofis, proves it to be such; Remember this, and show yourselves Men; shew that you have the Use of your rational Faculties, by examining these self-evident Truths, and bringing them again to Mind.

This is the Drift and Purport of these Words; and the Use that I shall make of them will be contained in the following Obfervations, dA an adday advantage I forth o

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The first remarkable Thing implied in them is, that glaring Abfurdities and Impleties may be introduced and practifed in religious or other stone stone was Worship.

What can be more abfurd than to suppose an inanimate material Substance, either from the Figure it had been wrought into, the Ceremonies it had passed through, or the Place it was enthrined in, to have been transformed into a God; invested, at least, with Almighty Power, (the lowest Notion of a Deity includes this Attribute.) to fall down and worship, and pay all Kinds of divine Honours to it; though, at the same Time, there had been no visible Transformation in the Substance itself: but it still retained, to all Appearance, every Property of lifeless Matter: This is such a groß Abuse of the Senses, and so repugnant to common Understanding, that it would be an high Indignity to Mankind, even to Suppose the Possibility of it, were it not known to have been an indisputable Fact, and warranted by authentic Records of ancient History.

This Idolatry, likewise, was no less impious than foolish.

noi:

The Knowledge of the Being of a God, His Unity, and infinite Perfections, had been communicated to the Children of Ifrael by all stode of the seed for though show in their

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their inspired Writings: They had learned that He had made a Covenant with their Forefathers, had vouchfafed to ftyle Himfelf the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and had chosen their Seed for His peculiar People; that He had, by an extraordinary Providence, refcued them from the Egyptian Bondage, preserved them in the Wilderness, and settled them in the Land of Canaan; that He had instituted a Theograpy among them, and, in a particular Manner, guarded them against Polytheilm and Idolatry: The two first Commandments, which God Himself gave to them by the Hand of Moles, were, " Thou thalt have no other Gods but Me; Thou shalt " not make to thyself any graven Image:" These were written upon a Table of Stone, to be a perpetual standing Memorial of their Duty; and they were commanded to weave them in their Garments, and to inscribe them upon the Pillars of their Houses; that they might continually remind themselves of them, and, thence, transcribe them on the Table of their Heart. Idolatry was marked out by their Law, as a Crime of a capital Nature, and inhibited by the feverest Penalties; the most dreadful of all temporal Punishments, Famine, Pestilence, and the Sword, with utter Extirpation, were denounced against the whole Nation,

when this Vice became epidemical: And the Individual, in whose House or Possession any Idol should be found, was sentenced to be destroyed, together with his Family, and all that

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But, notwithstanding all these Precautions for preventing the Beginning and Spreading of this Abomination; and, notwithstanding the monstrous Absurdities and horrid Impicties with which it abounded, in Process of Time it became the popular and fashionable Vice; not only among a few, or for a short Interval, but among all their Tribes, and for many Ages; we read of it in the Pentateuch, in the Chronicles of almost every King, and in the Writings of all the Prophets. "Their Land," (saith Isaiah) "is full of Idols; they worship the "Work of their own Hands, that which their "Fingers have made: The mean Man boweth "down, the great Man humbleth himself."

Hence it is evident, that abfurd and impious Things have been introduced and practifed in religious Worship; and it is as certain they may be repeated; the same Causes will always produce the same Effects, and these Causes were not peculiar to the People of Israel, neither were they owing to such rare Incidents, critical Conjunctures as can never happen at any other Time, or in any other Nation;

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but they were as general as the Ignorance and Folly of Mankind; which will plainly appear, if we consider, that, as the Deity is the ultimate Object of divine Worship, the Manner and Substance of it will be according to the Sentiments that have been conceived of Him: When these Ideas are just and true, the Religion will be solid and rational: But, when imperfect and false, the Religion will be maimed or absurd: But imperfect or false Opinions result from crude Observations, minute Reasonings, or ungoverned Passions, which are not particular, local, or national, but common to all Mankind.

The first Things that strike the Senses, and put Men upon thinking of and acknowledging a Supreme Being, are generally the wonderful Works of Power: Many, indeed, are fo thoughtless and stupid, as to let them pass unnoticed, in the common Course of Nature; though there cannot be stronger Proofs of Omnipotence than what daily occur to us, and constantly meet our Eyes; yet Custom, by rendering them familiar, lulls our Attention to Sleep: but, when God is pleased to shew Himself in awful Thunder and Lightening, Inundation, and Earthquake, wide-wasting Pestilence and Famine, then the Inhabitants of the Earth are roused from their Lethargy, all fear and tremble, and a deep Sense of a Supe-

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riour Being is imprinted upon their Minds: Some few, awakened by these alarming Instances of this stupendous Attribute, will improve upon them, and make farther Enquiries into the Nature of the Most High; but the Generality of Mankind will fit down with the Ideas which their Panick have raifed of Him. and viewing Him in the Mirror of this Paffion, will consider Him as a Being, armed with Almighty Power, abstractedly from every other Perfection, and wielding this Power with apparent Wrath in the Destruction of His Creatures. It is easy to conceive, what the Religion of these Persons must be; they will worship God as the King of Terrors, with a trembling Heart; cringe before Him with abject Servility; earnestly beg to be exempted from the Vengeance of His Fury; and, perhaps, be glad to compound for the Favour which Polyphemus conferred on Ulysses, that they shall be the last depoured parels any build and north

There is no Passion in human Nature which hath been so fruitful of Superstition as Fear: It gave Rise to that reigning Opinion among the Ancients, of a self-existent evil Being, presiding, at least, over Half the World: Such was Osiris held to be, among the Egyptians, and, from them, among all the Eastern Nations.

Challanier:

Fear

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Pear produced different Effects, according to the different Tempers it had to work upon, or the different Pallions it was compounded within a reduced as a made nature every

In efferingle and publishment Minds, where it was the fole or Mafter Pathon, the Delty was pictured with all the ghally Forms their affrightened Imaginations could draw, and, in the Words of the Palmill. " as a "Man feared, to was his Displeasure." Hence, some worthipped evil Spirits and Demons, others anthrined and idelized the most noxious Animals, as Serpents, Dragons, and Crocodiles, being most obvious to their Hears.

When this Postion was balanged with Pride and a warm Imagination, as either Passion prevailed, it raised Presumption or Despair : If Fear was afcendant, the Soul was hung with mountal Horrors, all was Darkness and Despair: But, if Pride rode miumphant, then the Mind was elated with vain Confidence upon the Favour of the Deity and the coltation Forvours which over-weeming Fancy enkindled in the Breast of the Enthuhalt, were interpreted as divine inspirations: Of this Kind of Worthippers were the Sybilline and Pythian Priests and Priestelles, among the Heathens; the Kataphrygians, Montanifis, and Marcofians, in the primitive Times of Christianity; Foor

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Christianity; and such are the Jansenists, Pie-

tifts, and Methodifts of the prefent Age.

Again, Fear operated very differently in flern and imperious Constitutions; here the Deity appeared as an inexorable and cruel Tyrant. Persons of this rigid Complexion, inflead of being fostened, were brutalized by their Religion; Inhumanity was incorporated into their Divinity, and the more barbarous and favage thele Devotees made themselves, the nearer Resemblance they bore to their Deity; they therefore endeavoured to recommend themselves to him by the most atrocious Acts of Violence, and from their furious Zeal perpetrated horrid Murders; butchering innocent Persons, nay, even their nearest Relations, (whose Lives, by the strictest Ties of Nature, Honour and Conscience, they were most obliged to preferve) not only deliberately and in cool Blood, but devoutly, as a facred Act of Piety, and an acceptable Immolation to their God. Val

Of this Class were the Votaries of Nemefis and Mars, among the Greeks and Romans, and the Worshippers of Moloch, among the Canaanites; these last, (as it is well known,) exercised Cruelty upon themselves and their Families; for " they cut their own Flesh with Knives and Lancets, they made their Chiltreated.

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"dren pass through the Fire to this grim Idel; and stained his Altar with human Gore." Of the Jews likewise we read, that "some of their Fathers shed innocent Blood, even the Blood of their Sons and of their Daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the Idols of Camaan, and the Land was defiled with Blood."

But, though Fear, or some Composition of it, is the general Cause, yet several other intemperate Passions have been the Parents of Superstition : Men have made to themselves, Gods after their own Lusts, and have either deined the Objects, or fet Divinities over them: St. Paul says of the Cretians, that " their God was their Belly :" And, in another Place, that "Covetoulness is Idolatry:" The Apostle, perhaps, might not intend to charge the Sensualist or Miser with believing Pleasure or Gold to be real Gods, but only ferving them with as much Devotion as if they had been: Yet it is certain, that some have adored the God of Riches, of Drunkenness, and libidinous Pleasures, as real Beings: Temples have been erected and confecrated to their Service; Sacrifices offered upon their Altars; their necessary Self-existence, and several other Properties of a Deity, supposed, by the sacred Formalities with which they have been treated. mosts

DISCOURSE VI. 223

treated, and the folenn Addresses made to

Innumerable are the Phrenfies which have forung from this prolific Source; but these recited are sufficient to establish the first Observation, That absurd and impious Things have been introduced and practifed in religious Worship.

The next Observation is, that Reason and common Sense are the proper Judges of religious Institutions and Doctrines.

The Abfurdities which the Jews had been guilty of in their idolatrous Worship, were laid before them in the most plain and familiar Manner; God Himfelf, by His Prophet, appealed to their Understanding, and argued with them from the Principles of human Reafon: He bid them judge, whether it was not a shocking Abuse of common Sense, to suppose the Relidue of a Log of Wood, (a Part of which they had burned in the Fire, and warmed themselves with,) to have been metamorphofed, without any visible Change in its Substance, into an immaterial, immortal, selfexisting Being; to prostrate themselves before it, and pay all Kinds of divine Honours to it, as if it had been the fovereign Lord of Heaven and Barth, from whom they received all they had, and expected all they wanted; Remember P that

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"Remember this;" that is, reflect and confider with yourselves upon the Absurdity of this Behaviour: Prove this Idol by your Senses whether it hath not all the Properties of Wood: View it, doth it not retain all the Appearance of a senseless Block? Are there any Signs of Life or Motion in it? Handle it, is it not hard and impenetrable? May it not be cleaved, fawn, or used in the same Manner as any other Piece of Timber? Put it into the Fire, will it not burn as freely as the other Part? What Difference is there between them? Compare them, and you will find none: Why then do you think so differently of them? Or, if you trust to your Senses and Judgment in one Cafe, why do you refign them. in another ? This partial Application of your Understanding, must be unbecoming the Character of a rational Being: Exert your intellectual Faculties in every Instance, and shew yourselves Men, as well on religious as natural Subjects of avert or (white savious all Lauria w

From this familiar Expostulation of the Deity with the Jews, upon the Vanity of their Idolatries, from His submitting these Things to the Test of their Senses and their Understanding, and, from this divine Injunction, to acquit themselves like Men, by canvaffing, confidering, and reflecting upon them, I infer, that

Remember

that buman Reason is a proper Judge of religious Subjects, and that it is the Duty of every rational Being to try them by it.

This is a direct and immediate Consequence from these Words, and the Occasion of them: It cannot be said, that Reason is to sit upon this Kind of Superstition, and no other; all are alike absurd and impious; if we must judge of one, we may judge of all; or how is it possible to know which is subject to our Scrutiny, and which not? Or what shall exempt any from it? Which are the Vanities that have the Privilege of taking such a Sanctuary in Religion, as to make it a Profanation for Reason to touch them? Or of being so idolized, as to have it sacrificed to them?

And certainly it will not be said, that we may judge of Superstition, but not of Religion: The Permission to try base, and not sterling Gold, carries an Inconsistency with it: How are we to distinguish, till we have tried them? And by trying what is false, we must try what is true; the one implies the other. If we are to put nothing into the Scale of Reason, but what is light, it is supposed that we know what is light, and what is not, before we have weighed it; that is, we know it without Reason, which is absurd, and contrary to what has been admitted.

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If, therefore, counterfeit Religion may be brought to the Balance of Reason, true Religion may stand the same Test.

And again, if Religion in general be once admitted, it must always continue to be the Subject of Reason; there is nothing in the Nature of Religion that can render it at one Time less subject to it than another; there may be likewise Innovations in Religion; corrupt Doctrines or Practices, like the Tares among the Wheat, may be scattered and grow up with it; and which cannot be separated, unless Reason retains its Authority: The Understanding, moreover, may be stronger, or better informed; by which Means, Errors in the first Judgment may be rectified in the second; Reason, therefore, being once, must always continue to be, a Judge of Religion.

But the Importance of this Subject deferves, and demands, a full and particular Difcustion.

Reason is the peculiar Characteristick of Man, which distinguishes him from, and exalts him above the whole visible Creation.

Other Beings have external Senses in common with him; they see, seel, smell, and hear; and some, more exquisitely than himself: These Senses are a Kind of mechanical Powers, receiving their Images from extraneous

traneous Objects, and conveying them to the Senforium by fixed Laws of Nature; and, while Things continue in the fame State, they act, and are acted upon, in the same Manner, and are subject to no Changes but what are independent and involuntary. Again, Man can claim no Pre-eminence over the Animal World from his Appetites or Affections; they are blind and necessary Attractions or Repulsions, having no Guidance or Direction of themfelves, but permanently tend to, or from, the fame Things: Other Creatures not only enjoy them in common with him, but, apparently, in greater Perfection, having them moderated by Nature, and fcarce subject to Excess; but in Man they are liable to Excess, and, if left to themselves, will prove him infane and montrous. I said to be deline visiting at saft

Memory, Imagination, Invention, and Conscience, are the Appendages of Reason, necessarily accompany it, and must be reckoned as the consequential Parts of it. 19 10 blaz yllown

Man, therefore, exclusively of his intellectual Powers, differs from inferiour Animals in ho other Manner, than as they, in their feveral Species, differ from one another; and would be properly placed under the fame Genus of necessary irrational Agents. and a red W 1 state tive lies before 1814 Dain he not bence

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It is Reason, then, that emobles his Nature, and exalts him to a far superiour Class.

But this Superiority will appear more evident, if we consider the Privileges it confers

upon him.

First, It is the Principle of Liberty; it exempts him from the Chains of Necessity, and renders him a free Agent: enables him to collect, compare, and reslect upon the Reports of his Senses; to superintend and regulate his Appetites and Passions; and, in many natural Things, to discern between Truth and Fassioned: I do not affert that Man is a perfectly free Agent, or a perfectly rational Being; he is only both in Part, and hath the Principles of Necessity as well as Liberty within him: All that I mean, is, that so far as Man is free, he is entirely indebted to his Reason for it.

But, however small a Portion of it his munificent Creator hath been pleased to honour him with, yet, when compared with Creatures wholly void of it, what a great Difference will appear between them! What eminent Advantages doth he derive from it! Doth it not render him a contemplative, sociable, communicative Being? With what an enlarged Capacity doth he act in social and political Life! What a Field of Speculation and Practice lies before him! Doth he not hence derive

derive all his Attainments in Wisdom and Philosophy, Arts, Sciences, and Manufactures? And contrive infinite Employments for procuring the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life?

But, secondly, it is the peculiar Excellence of Reason to be the Principle of Morality: it furnishes Man with a Sense of the Circumstances he is placed in; the Connections with, and Relations to the Persons he is concerned with; and supplies him with a Consciousness of an Obligation to act agreeably to them: From this Principle, he perceives what good Things Providence hath done for him, and what he himself is expected to execute: Thus it fets a Rule before him for the Direction of the Liberty, and Use of the Powers, it hath conferred upon him: It doth not, indeed, fet a Rule before him of its own creating, but only imparts the Knowledge of it to him: Truth and Rectitude are in Nature, and independent of him; and the Knowledge of them his Reafon, in Part, communicates to him, and informs him that they are the Institutions of the God of Nature, who wills His Conformity to. them: Thus Reason constitutes him a moral Agent, and invests him with the Power of being wife or foolist, virtuous or vicious, good ecoure a Senfe of our idelative to

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Reason,

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Reason, by making us moral, renders us religious Beings, as Morality comprehends our whole Conduct, when applied to good and evil, and Religion is that Branch of it, which relates to the Deity.

But, to be more explicit upon this Subject, I will consider Reason, in respect both to na-

tural and revealed Religion.

The Whole of natural Religion is evidently founded upon Reason: How do we acquire any Idea of a Supreme Being? Not from our external Senses, He is an invisible, spiritual Substance; neither from our Affections, which, (though they may feel the Effects of his Power or Goodness) are confined to the present Objects, and cannot abstract Ideas, or deduce Goodness and Power, and place them in some Agent; this will be inferring Causes from Effects, the Province or Property of Reason; every Apprehension therefore of the Deity implies some Act of the Understanding; and every Sentiment or Conception of Him is according to its Use of the Means which lead to the Knowledge of Him; hence, Reason lays the Foundation of natural Religion, by discovering the great Object of it.

In like Manner, as it leads us to the Knowledge of the Supreme Being, so, through it's Means, we acquire a Sense of our Relation to. Realtm.

and Connection with Him; this arises from the Consideration of His infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, and our Weakness, Ignorance, and Dependance; and from these abstracted Ideas, it still proceeds to abstract others, and infer the Duties of Reverence, Love, Gratitude, Thanksgiving, Resignation, Obedience, and every other Part of pious Devotion.

Thus, are we indebted for the whole Sum and Substance of natural Religion to the Powers of Reason; and it is called the Religion of Nature, or the catholick Religion*, because it is the Religion which the Light of Nature, or the Reason of Mankind discovers; and as Reason is the sole Author of it, so it must be a proper and sufficient Judge of all appertaining to it.

I will now proceed to examine how far rewealed Religion comes under the Province of Reason; and, for setting this Point in a clear Light, I will consider Reason sirst with respect to the Proofs, and then the Doctrines of Revelation.

First, in respect to its Proofs:

In order to convince Mankind of a Revelation from God, there must, of Necessity, be made an Appeal to their Understanding; and the making of this Appeal supposes the Understanding to be a competent Judge of it, or that

For catholick Religion, fee Athanafian Creed.

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the Proofs produced are adapted to it's Capacity, and sufficient for a rational Conviction.

This likewise is evident from the Nature of

the Proofs themselves:

These are of two Kinds, external and internal. The External are Proofs of a Supernatural Power or Knowledge; the Internal, of the Divinity of that Power or Knowledge. The external Proofs are manifest Appeals to the Understanding, through the Senses: Such are Miracles and Prophecies, with their Completion; which (being exhibited in an unreserved and public Manner) are visible Demonstrations of a supernatural Power or Knowledge, and the extraordinary Dignity of the Person endowed with them: There may be some internal Proofs intermixed with them, but, for the Sake of Perspicuity, I must confider them abstractedly, as external Proofs: And as such they are displayed, to convey a Sense of a supernatural Power or Knowledge, and submitted to our Reason; which we are called upon to make the Test or Judge of them; whose proper Office it is to examine whether there hath been any Deception in them; or they have been really what they appeared to be, and manifestly surpassed the usual Powers of Nature; and, if we have not been Eye-Witnesses, but received them from the Relation -111

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lation of those who were, or more distant Tradition, then it is our Province to enquire diligently into the Number and Credibility of the Relators; the Authenticity and Universality of the Tradition; and, thence, to form our Judgment of them: Reason, therefore, in all Cases, is evidently a proper Judge of the external Proofs of a Revelation; and, from a Review of this Part of its Credentials, it refers us to the Examination of the other Part, the internal Proofs, or the Dollrines of a Revelation parallel to our Understanding; and which, from the Nature of a Proof itself, may be tried by the Principles of Reason, or the established Rules of Morality, and the general received Opinions of the Being and Attributes of the Deity; which are laid down as flandard Truths, and we must judge of the Divinity of a Revelation from the Agreement or Disagreement of its fubject Matter with them: That is, we must confider whether any Thing hath been advanced inconfiftent with natural Duty; or, whether it conveys any Dostrine that is abfurd, inbuman, or impious; contrary to the common Sense of Mankind; and the common received Laros of Morality; whether it discourages Virtue, or countenances Vice; or be, in any Circumstance, unworthy of the Deity, and derogatory of the Perfections by natural Religion ascribed

DISCOURSE VI.

ascribed to Him: Should any Thing of this Kind appear, it will fink itself, and whatever adheres to it; this single Testimony will outweigh all other Evidence; and, whatever Signs of Power may attend it (though even an Angel from Heaven come to prove its Divinity,) they will be over balanced by the Proofs which Reafon brings against it. we the the the the fine ! I have

But should no Lesson be taught contrary to what is contained in the Book of Nature, nor any Scripture tend to obliterate the Characters written fo legibly on the Heart, that "he who runs may read them;" should there be found a complete Harmony between natural and revealed Religion; should this ratify, restore, improve and enforce the moral Law; and the more strictly it be canvassed, the more rational it appears; or, in general, should it be such a Revelation as buman Understanding, when best informed, hath abundant Reason to suppose an omnipotent, omniscient, all-just, and all-gracious Sovereign of the World would make, whenever He should vouchsafe to communicate his Will to Mankind, in this explicit Manner, then there will be all the concurrent Testimonies of Supernatural Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, in the Works of Revelation, to establish its Divinity; as, in the Works of Nature, to convince us of the Being and Perfections of God: bodicola

In both Cases the Proofs are of the same Kind, Appeals to the human Understanding, References to a Standard set up by buman Reason, or, to the natural and moral Truths, which the common Sense of Mankind hath recognized and admitted, as first Principles.

Lastly, how can it be ascertained what is worthy or unworthy of the Deity, but by applying it to those general Conceptions, which, through the Light of Nature, have been formed of Him: There must be an antecedent Worthiness or Unworthiness in the Mind; the Idea of Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, must be first established by Reason, and made the Rule or Canon, for trying the Persections ascribed to Him.

Mistake me not, I do not assert that human Reason is an adequate Judge of the Actions of the Almighty, or that Man hath an Right to determine, in an absolute Sense, what is worthy or unworthy of the Supreme Governour of the World: He hath no Authority to arraign His Administration, any farther than as it relates to himself, and is the necessary Subject Matter, for forming his Faith, or adjusting his Conduct; and so far it is submitted to his Examination.

The Works of the Deity are infinite in their Number and Kind, and placed at all Distances Sanshival

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from us; some sew are set at a proper Point of View, and we have a full Command of them.

Some are farther distant; great Part of which appears distinct, but some Part is confused.

Again, others are still farther removed, here the Perspicuity diminishes, the Consuson increases, till at length, the rest evade our Sight.

What then are within the Compass of our Understanding, are nothing in Comparison to what are beyond it; and, as these Removes are infinite, fo are the Objects in them, which must, of Necessity, be incomprehensible or mysterious: All, indeed, declare the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of their Creator; but the few alone, which we perceive, either in Whole or in Part, declare them to us: These are our Demonstrations of the Being and Attributes of God; which we may canvass; as He who made both us and them, hath adapted our Capacity to them, and fet them as Proofs of Himself to us: These are the Revelations of the Deity in natural Religion; we plainly trace His Vestiges; and rest our Faith upon them; inferring that all Things above our Understanding are likewise the Works of His Hands, and equally perfect in their Kinds.

It is just the same with revealed Religion: What is plain and obvious, is the Object of Reafon, and submitted to human Judgment, as the

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Evidence

Evidence of its Truth, and, also of the Things above our Comprehension communicated to us: Hence it manifestly appears, that Reason is a Judge of the internal as well as external Proofs of a Revelation.

What remains is, to consider Reason with respect to the Dostrines of Revelation; but I have, in some Part, anticipated this Subject: As these Doctrines are either plain and simple, or sublime and mysterious.

The plain and fimple Doctrines, I have just observed, are it's internal Evidences, and of which Reason is a Judge.

Sublime or mysterious Doctrines are of a mixed Nature, partly above our Comprehenfion, and partly within it; where they are within it, they are internal Proofs of a Revelation; but where mysterious, Revelation is a Proof of them; and, therefore, they must be confidered in a double Capacity, an antecedent and subsequent Sense to the Revelation; and, confequently, are reciprocally dependant on each other: For instance, should any Point of Doctrine or Matter of Fact be declared in Part, of which we were before wholly ignorant; and had no other Means of attaining to the Knowledge of, but through this Promulgation; then, in the Parts not revealed, the Subject will continue mysterious or incomprehenfible:

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hensible; we can form no determinate lilea; have no Data, or Principles to advance; and therefore, in these Respects, it cannot be the Subject of Reason; but the Parts discovered will be within our Comprehension : we can conceive that it doth or will exist, and in fuch a Manner with fuch Circumstances, Properties, Qualities, and Effects, as have been disclosed to us; and this Existence, these Circumstances, Properties, Qualities, and Effects, may be brought to, and tried at the Bar of Reason; it may be enquired, whether any of them imply any natural Impossibility or Abfurdity? Whether they are contrary to any Principles of Truth, or the standing Rules of Equity? What hath been imported to us, may likewife be a Subject of our Enquiry, as to what Uses it hath? What End it serves? And, in general, whether it may be worthy of the Deity to communicate to Mankind, or equal to the Dignity and Importance of a Divine Mission? In these Respects it will be intelligible and plain, an internal Proof of a Revelation, and falls within the Cognizance and Judgment of human Reason. daily to gray

Thus, should there be a Revelation of future Rewards and Punishments; and the World only informed, in general, that all Men will be treated in another Life, according to the Part they

have acted in this; but should there be no determinate Time or Place assigned for this Distribution, and no Description given of their Manner and Kind, then, in these Respects, we should be wholly in the Dark; Reason would have no Light to direct its Steps, and therefore no Concern with them; and whatever might be suggested, would be only the Dreams or Hallucinations of Fancy: "If the Eye hath "not seen, nor the Ear heard; nor can it "enter into the Heart of Man to conceive, "the Things that are prepared for them who so love or hate God," then they must be above our Comprehension, and can be no Subjects of human Enquiry.

But we may reason upon what have been revealed, as upon Rewards and Punishments in general, their Nature, and the Use or Neceffity of additional Motives for the Encouragement of Virtue, and Suppression of Vice; and enquire into their Propriety, as the Matter of an Evangelical Mission: That these are the Topicks of Reason, and the internal Testimonies of the Divinity of a Revelation, will evidently appear from a contrary Supposition: Should any one, who may claim Inspiration, declare, that the wicked Man will be rewarded with Happiness in another World, according to the Evil he hath done in this Life, and the Virtuous Demonies.

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Virtuous be miserable in Proportion to the Good be hath committed here; this Repugnance with the first Principles of Justice, would be an ample Refutation of what he had advanced, and an infallible Proof of an Imposture.

Again, when it is infifted upon, as an Article of Faith, or a Doctrine of Revelation, that the Bread and Wine in the Eucharift are actually changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ: Here, upon the Conviction of such a Change, Reason could have been no Judge of the Circumstances or Manner of it, how, or which Way it had been done, had Reveletion been filent upon these Points, and in this Sense, the Transubstantion would have been mysterious or incomprehensible; but the Understanding and external Senies are competent Judges of the Effect, or the Truth of such a Change; it may be asked, whether the Doctrine implies any natural Contradiction, or supposes the same Body to be in different Places at the fame Time; we may reason upon it, after the same Manner as the Jews were commanded to do upon their wooden Image; try the Elements by our Senses, whether they have the Appearance, the Touch, the Tafte of Bread and Wine; and prove them by various Experiments; and if, from the Report of all our Senses, they still retain the Properties of those Elements, zuouni V

Elements, have we not the same Authority, (and that Authority was Divine,) for trusting to our Senses and Understanding, and inferring, that they are the same Bread and Wine, after Confectation, as the Elements from which they were taken; as the Jews had to conclude that their Idol, after it had been confectated and enshrined, was still the same Wood as the Block from which it had been hewn?

Hence this illusive Transmutation, which flies so violently in the Face of common Sense, and is charged with such alarming Consequences, cannot be a Doctrine of Revelation; but the Passage in Holy Writ whence it has been deduced, must have a figurative or allegorical Meaning; and with this Construction it will appear easy and natural, agreeable to the Context, and the Intention of the Author.

Thus are we indebted to Reason and common Sense for exploding this absurd and blassbemous Doctrine, restoring a Divine Institution to its primitive Purity, and rescuing our holy Religion from Superstitions, as gross as were ever practised by ignorant and idolatrous Pagans.

We are commanded " to prove all Things;"
"to try the Spirits, whether they be of God;"
but how shall we prove them, or with what
shall this Trial be made, but the UnderQ 2 standing;

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standing; this is the Touchstone, to which they must be brought; if they will not stand this Test, they may be safely pronounced false and counterfeit: When any of our modern Enthulialts prelume upon the Gift of Inspiration; when they call their external Fervour an holy Energy, and confidently affure us, that the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, resides in the Tabernacle of their Heart, manifested by the Illuminations they perceive within them, should no Argument be offered, but what is inclosed in the Cabinet of their Mind, and Nothing transpire, Reason would be excluded from all Examination; what Judgment could be formed of Experiences, that could not be described; of which no Idea could be communicated, fave to those who felt them; we might, indeed, look upon such Persons as Travellers in an imaginary World, and fuspend our Faith concerning their marvellous Reports; but could neither confirm nor disprove them : But, should this internal Effervescence of the Spirit break out at the Door of their Lips, and evaporate in extatick Ejaculations to the Deity, and unpremeditated Discourses to the People, then it would come within the Reach of human Reafon, and afford ample Matter for the meanest Capacity to try what Spirit it is of all word and

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blooden's Trad be made, but the Under-

Should it then appear that they speak with more than the Tongue of Angels, and as no Man ever did; should they approve themselves the Oracles of Truth, and say nothing unbecoming the Holy Spirit to declare, then "he who hath Ears to hear let him hear"; let all Men repair to their Tabernacles and Oratories; let no Expression be lost; but every Syllable written in Letters of Gold, and faithfully preserved, as the sacred Records of Heaven.

But should their extemporaneous Harangues be a mere Rhapfody of Nonfense; an indigested Chaos, void of Form or Substance; frequently false, and sometimes impious and blasphemous; should they invoke the God of Wisdom with vain, foolish, and presumptuous Supplications; or approach the Throne of the Almighty Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, with Addresses which a rational Being would be ashamed to make, or receive from the lowest of bis Fellow Creatures; " then out of their own Mouth " would they be condemned," and their own Lips prove them perverse: Then would Reafon have fufficient Testimony to pronounce that they are Dupes to their own Vanity; that their Zeal is without Knowledge; that the Spirit which actuates them is a Spirit of enthufiaftick Madness, practifing Illusions upon over a Q3

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their Minds, palming upon them profound Ignorance for sublime Wisdom, and giving Utterance to their Folly; that the visionary Light within them is Darkness, or the false Glarg of an Ignis Fatuus, which their overbeated Imagination hath enkindled in their Breast.

It is no Wonder that these slaming Bigots are so violent against Reason, when Reason is so strong against them; but let them take Care how they dismiss their Understanding, less they be deemed insane, in those Things where they will not admit the Use of it; and he who is delirious in any one Point, is certainly a disordered Person, however rationally he may acquit himself in all others: These Enthusialts, are a Kind of Don Quixotes in Religion: They may talk sensibly, and show themselves Men upon indifferent Subjects, but, touch upon Religion, and their Understanding is sted, and they are attacked with Fits of Lunacy.

Thus have I endeavoured to support my second Observation, That Reason and common Sense are the proper Judges of religious Doctrines: There are none so sublime and mysterious but what are, in some Part, parallel with our Understanding, and there it is a competent Judge of them; and even in those Parts above

above our Comprehension, though Nothing can be ascertained from their Nature, yet an Opinion may be formed of their Credibility, from what hath been already known of them; and from an Enquiry into the Knowledge and Veracity of the Persons upon whose Testimony they stand: And there it will be a fufficient Judge, not to determine, scientifically, whether the Doctrine be true or falle, but whether it be an Object of our Affent or Diffent; and though Faith, established upon such Evidence, may be styled implicit, yet, as it arises from the best Informations that can be acquired, it is the most rational Faith that our imperfect Nature will admit of; and, therefore, Reason is, in every Senfe, a proper Test of religious Subjects.

The third and last Inference that I shall make is, the Necessity and Advantage of Remembrance or Recollection; Bring it again to Mind, O ye Transgressors!

It is not sufficient to show ourselves Men, by exerting our intellectual Powers to acquire a rational Conviction; but we would persevere in the Exercise of them, to retain that Conviction. Religious and moral Truths are Rules of Practice, in daily Use, for adjusting our Conduct; and, on that Account, should be strong and effective Principles in the Mind, prevalent in our Thoughts, and ready to occur on every Emergency;

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Emergency; for which End it is necessary to imprint them deeply on our Heart, and constantly renew their Impression, by refreshing our Memories with, and continually reslecting upon them.

Most of these practical Truths are Axioms; there are rarely any Mediums, clearer than themselves, to demonstrate them; and they are generally so self-evident, as not to require any farther Proof; if the Mind be in a State of Conviction, they will be acknowledged as foon as beard: Men do not want fo much a Logician, as a Prompter; Reasoning, on common, moral or religious Topicks, is little more than a Repetition or Recollection of what hath been already known: The chief Use, in discouring on such Subjects, setting them in various Lights, illustrating them by Examples, confirming them by different Kinds of Proof, and exposing the Absurdities of their Contraries, is, to engage and detain the Attention, renew the Knowledge of, and imprint them upon the Mind. It is easy to bring Men to a speculative Affent, or languid Acquiescence in these Truths, but the Difficulty lies in raising a bearty Conviction, to influence and affect their Conduct; form and and more, being form.

The Memory is, of itself, naturally weak, and foon dismisses whatever hath not been repeatedly inculcated,

inculcated, or strictly committed to it's Charge; and we frequently render it much weaker by our Prejudices, Partialities, and Paffions; present Pleasures or Profits are strangely apt to engage the Attention, and suppress the little Sense of Duty that rises up against them: Men do not err from natural Ignorance, but wilful Oblivion; they know what is right, but they will not think of it; they cast it from them.

"To do as we would be done unto," is such an evident Principle of Equity, that every one subscribes to it on the first Hearing; and the Reason why it is not as universally practifed, is, that is excluded by other Thoughts; and from Want of being recollected, or brought again to Mind, becomes the same as if it had never existed; an inactive dead Principle within us.

In like Manner, an intelligent Being could never have been brought to offer the greatest Violence to his Senses, and stupidly practise palpable Absurdities in Religion, had he not been intoxicated with the Fumes of Superstition and determined to close his Eyes, and sleep upon his Duty.

Religion is a Subject of the highest Importance, the Behaviour of a Creature to his Creator, a rational Being to the God of Reason. Let us consider

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confider what gross Absurdities and horrid Impieties have been, and may be again, introduced into religious Worship; and, as it appears that Reason is a competent Judge and a proper Test of it's Doctrines, and that there is no Security against these Corruptions, but the Understanding, it must be our principal Duty to apply it to these Subjects: In order, therefore, to raise ourselves from the Slumbers of Enthusiasm and Superstition, we should do well to have a Remembrancer, (after the Example of Philip, King of Macedon,) who might daily remind us, that we are Men, have the Use of rational Faculties, and should exert them in every In-Rance: Since God hath diftinguished us for intelligent Beings, let us distinguish ourselves as fuch, in those Things which relate to Him: If it be our Duty and our Interest to confider and thew ourselves Men in all other Respects, why must Religion alone be exempted from it? If Reason makes us religious Beings, why should Religion make us irrational? If the Service of our Maker be our noblest Employment, why doth it not merit our highest Endowment? Or, why must we shew outselves less than Men, in that which will make us more than Men? Who hath required this at our Hand? Surely the God of Wisdom, who hath clothed us with this Wedding Garment, will never expect

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pect that we should divest ourselves of it, when we come into his Presence: This is a Nakedness which we ought to be ashamed of; and instead of exposing ourselves before Him, rather call upon the Mountains to fall upon, and the Hills to cover us: Let us, therefore, above all Things, take Care not to offer upon the Altar of infinite Wisdom, the Sacrifice of Fools; but endeavour to recommend ourselves to Him, who is pure Intelligence itself, by beightening our Resemblance to Him, and worshipping Him in Spirit, and in Truth.

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ich angeleiche der der der Augustie Leine der Schriften der Kannen Auss der Schriften ped that we should divest ourselves of it, when we dende into the Presence: This is a Maked-ness which we ought to be assumed of; and indicate of exposing outselves before Him; ration call upon the Moundins to fail upon, and the Hills to cover us: Let us, therefore, above all "This is cover us: Let us, therefore, above all "This is, take Care not to offer upon the Limit of appare Wijsten, the Sacrytic of Fost; but an actions to recovered outselves to Him; who who is seightfully that itself the being the outselves to Him; our K. Sacrytic and in Track, and worthing Him

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 Ules, and Abuses of them.

DISCOURSE VII.

the Affections, and enquire into the Nature,

Defines and Averdons, "with all Diligence, for out of them are the Islam of Life."

From this Explication I that trent the Sub-

Provens iv. 23. and van ?

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life.

HE Word Heart is used in various Senses in the holy Scripture; in one Place it imports the whole Mind; in others only Parts of it, as Reason, Conscience, or some particular Passion, as Fear, or Pride; but in its general Acceptation, it conveys an Idea of all the Affections, exclufively of the Understanding, or abstractedly from it; which Construction is always to be applied to it, unless another shall be particularly pointed out; which is so far from being the present Case, that we are immediately led to this common Interpretation: The Words are an Exhortation, or Injunction to the supreme Powers of the Mind, to superintend the Heart; the Sense is, " Keep thy Affections," or thy Defires

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Defires and Aversions, " with all Diligence, for out of them are the Issues of Life."

From this Explication I shall treat the Sub-

ject in the following Manner:

First, I will give a summary Description of the Affections, and enquire into the Nature, Uses, and Abuses of them.

Secondly, Confider in what Manner "Life

" may be faid to iffue from them."

And, lastly, Recommend and enforce the Duty enjoined, 4 of keeping the Heart with all Diligence," from the Confideration of the Importance and Necessity of it.

I shall begin with a Description of the Affections, and an Enquiry into the Nature,

Uses, and Abuses of them,

The Affections, then, are of two Kinds,

corporal and mental.

Defires

The corporal are fentual Appetites; fuch as Hunger, Thirst, the Sensations of the Pa-late, and in short every Impulse founded in, or derived from the Body: The mental exist folely or principally in the Mind; as Love, Be-nevolence, Compassion, Courage, Fear, Modefty, Emulation, the Defire of Fame or Honour, Indignation, Resentment, and such like,

All the Affections, both corportal and mental, are, in their original State, natural Modes or Qualities of the Body or Mind, and effential Properties

Properties of them; which by their various Combinations constitute the different Tempers and Constitutions of Mankind; - I appeal to every Man's Knowledge and Experience of himself, whether the Affections are adventitious, and acquired by any Art, Time, and Practice, or, implanted in our Nature, and innate in us? Do not Hunger, Thirst, and the distinguishing Faculties of the Palate, with their Power of creating Pain and Pleasure, come into the World with us, and are coeval with the Body? Our Tafte, indeed, may vary, but we do not occasion this Deviation, it proceeds from some Alteration in our Constitution. necessarily requiring such a Change of Taste.

Though fome corporal Propentities may not appear in the State of Infancy or Childhood, yet they are latent Principles, having their Commission to emerge, and exert themselves at an appointed Season. Super Land Williams?

The same is evident in mental Affections: The Love of Parents for their Offspring is a strong Affection, inherent in the Mind, that lies dormant till awakened by its Object; and he can have never felt this Passion, and must be an entire Stranger to the Nature of his own, and every other Species, of Animals, who entertains

the least Doubt of its being natural. olexico

Again,

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Again, what can be more natural, than to have Compassion on the affliced to sympathize with the diffressed, to feel Indignation at the Oppressor? This is the Genius of Humamity, these Affections are its distinguishing Characteristicks; it is as natural for a Man to have a humane Heart as a human Demeanour. In like Manner, it is indiffoutable that all Objects do not at first Sight seem indifferent to us, or strike us alike : Are we not pleas'd with, and, as it were, attracted by some, and displeased with, or repelled by others? Do not some appear amiable, beautiful, and raise our Admiration, while others are loathforne, horrid, and excite our Aversion, though we know not the Cause of this different Effect? Do not we feel the Passion of Fear, ere Reason hath begun to dawn, and long before it can suspect any Danger? To what shall we afcribe this Partiality and Prejudice, this Prepoffession, Panick, and Antipathy? Are they not necesfary Instincts, incorporated in our Frame, and made effential Parts of our Conftitution. Education and Custom co-operating with Na-

ture can work Wonders: The Passions gain incredible Strength by Indulgence; and when reinforced by Habit, it may be more difficult to suppress them, than to vary the Com-

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plexion of the Ethiopian, or erafe the Spots of the Leopard. Use and Custom can do much with indifferent Things: They can create a Facility of Action in the Body, and an Inclination in the Mind, but far different from the Ease and Propensity which Nature forms; nor are they worthy to be compared with of termed Passions: What Education and Use bring forth, are small and tender in their primeval State, demand continual Succour, and cannot arrive at their full Growth without constant Attention: They have their gradual Increase, and flowly rife to Maturity; and, even in their best Estate, will soon deeline and vanish, unless supported by incessant Application. - But there is no fuch Reluctance or Degeneracy in the Affections: They fpring fpontaneously in the Mind Nature propels them; no Practice is wanted to establish their Influence; they are perfect at their first Efforts. and need no Affistance, but to prune and refrain their Luxuriance; they do not lose their Force by Disuse, but exert themselves at all Seasons, with full Vigour, on every Appearance of their Object. - Is it possible to ascribe the infinite Variety of Dispositions, Qualities, and Tempers of Mankind, to Education and Custom alone?-Had they found the Mind a Carte blanche, could they have stamped instantly, R

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infantly, rapidly, or flowly, fuch lively Chaallers, as we let imprefied on it? Could they have formed fuch ftrong Paffions as Eminlution, Refentment, parental Affection, the Love of Life, and the Love of ourfelves! Could they have made thele to univerfal as to have admitted of no Exception; or erafed them, and established the contrary Affections in their Room? Could they have made Men have their Children, as heartily and universally as they now love them? All, thefe Things are manifestly impracticable, and contrary to the common Sente and Experience of Mankind. And, laftly, when Education and Cuftom are compared with the Affections, they will appear to be greatly inferiour to them! Though with the Affiftance of forme Paffions, they may fuppress others, yet they can avail but little, alone, against the weakest of them? Whatever Pains Men may take to eradicate the latter, they always revive and triumphefint A on been bus

Hence it appears, that our Affections do not derive their Existence from Education, Practice, or Custom; but are, in their primitive State, natural, and born with us, or innate Principles, and essential Parts of our Constitution.

I will explain, therefore, what their Properties are; all ballot to half-

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DISCOURSES VIL 239

And first, they are not free, but necessary Principles of Astron, constant, uniform, and (if I may use the Expression) mechanical Impulses; having the Direction that Nature gave them, which they cannot deviate from, or vary, bin continually pursue the fame Course.

They are, secondly, strong, energetick Powers, enger and forward Solicitors; malign to Delay, and argent for immediate Gracification; They likewise strangely assume, and mercase in Strength by Indulgence; and not having any Command over themselves, nor able to after-tail any Bounds, will, unrestrained, run into the greatest Excels.

But, lastly, Though they cannot command themselves, yet they are subject to the Authority of other Powers; they are pliant and true able in their Nature; may at first be soon taught Obedience, and will tamely brook a Denial when instead to it; and by early Discipling may be easily confined within due Limits.

This is the Nature; their are the Properties of the Affections; I will now confider their Use and End:

As they were implanted in us by our Creator, and incorporated in our Nature, it would be derogating from his unerring Wildom not to confider them as a necessary Part of our Confidentiates, good in their Kind, and instituted to football.

Iwar some psesul or valuable Purpose in Life:

Man is endowed with Reason as well as Affections; which is a far different, and more noble Accomplishment: It exalts him above the whole visible Creation, and constitutes him an intellectual, moral Agent; It is a free, supreme Principle, enabling him to think, reflect, and judge for himself; to survey his own Mind, discipline and regulate his Affections; and which, therefore, from its peculiar Eminence, sometimes implies the whole Man; as in these Words, "Keep thy Heart with all Diligence;" Who is to keep it, but the Understanding? It is an Address to this Superintendent to take peculiar Care of its subordinate Powers.

Since, then, we are compounded of Understanding and Affection, and each is natural and effential to us, it follows, that we partake of the Nature, both of Supremacy and Subjection; are partly rational, partly animal Beings; neither wholly one nor the other; but invested with Liberty and Necessity, and adapted for Service and Command: Hence it may be justly concluded that both Principles are necessary to our State ; that either, in the Degree given us, would have been insufficient and dosective, alone; that they mutually confirm each other, and unitedly promote their respective Ends :- Human Reason is weak and imanlwer perfect,

perfect, affording but faint Ideas of the Offices of our Station? an Inactive, cold Principle protractive in forming a Judgment, and dilatory in its Execution: Our Affections, therefore, were implanted in us, to supply these Defects, by impelling us to the Good, and repelling us from the Evil, which Reason cannot foresee. or quickening us to the Pursuit of the one, and Avoidance of the other, that it can fee. ads

A few familiar Instances will fully illustrate this Subject one successful linear and range ..

- Human Reason, without any Aid or Prompter, cannot afcertain the Quantity or Quality of Food necessary to support the Health and Strength of the Body, nor the proper Seafons for its being administered; or, had it this Knowledge, it would still want the Power to enforce fuch a frequent Repetition of it, as the continual Decay of our corporeal Frame stances, either ignorantly or wilfully neglect the Means of Life, or substitute what might be improper in their Place: Our omniscient Creator, therefore, hath obviated this Impotence of the Understanding, by superadding the Appetites of Hunger and Thirst, and the Sensations of the Palate, which alarm us of the Exigencies of our Nature, distinguish our Food, and are effectual and almost irrefiftible Again, Provocatives R 3

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Provocatives to the daily Reception of its Thus they answer their appointed Purpole: The Province of Reason hath only to supervise and counteract their Excess; in which also it is assisted by Satiety. The Use and Necellity of these Appetites are evident: And like Observations, might be made upon all the other Affections: They all equally affift the Understanding, and are alike necessary to promote their respective Ends. In the same Manner the mental Affections are the Auxiliaries or Handmaids of Reason, for the Preservation of Life, and the Discharge of the Duties of it: Fear and Antipathy are natural Instincts, to forewarn us of Evils which Reason cannot foresee, or sufficiently arm us against. Do not the Principles of Self-Preservation chiefly arise from that strong Passion, the Fear of Death? Doth it not make us shrink at imminent Destruction? Reason might dictate to us, in the Day of Diffres, the Duty of Relignation; but how faint would these Resolutions be, were not this all-influencine Guardian of Life to animate them, and inspire us with Resolution to bear the Calamities which Mortality or Misconduct bring upon us, and to wait with Patience till the Sovereign Author of Nature, who introduced us into the World, shall be pleased to remove us out from it. Again,

DISCOURSE WIL 261

Again, Men are naturally communicative, intimately connected, and reciprocally dependent Beings in who lean on one another, and require mutual Affiltance and Support. Now. bare Reafon would be lan incompetent Qualification for this State to it cannot give us a perfect Idea of the Union of our Interefts, or the Necessity of a perpetual Circulation of Favours is not have the Power to support it the present apparent Good or Evil would frequently dazzle its Judgment, and prevent its Differnment of Duty through the Difficulties and Dangers that lie before it; and it will be greatly embarrafied with the Inconsistencies raised between self and social, private and publick Interest : Benevolent Affections, therefore, are the necessary Springs to focial Actions; and fo prevalent in our Constitution, that the Understanding hath little more to do, than to Superintend and restrain them :--- Though Reason cannot make us benevolent Beings, yet our benevolent Affections can in some Degree make us rational, as without these we should aft both inbumanly and irrationally : Compare them with our Reason, and see which form the tender, sympathizing Temper; whether the Head or the Heart hath the largest Share in Acts of Charity: Are R 4 not

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not a Fellow-Feeling, a Sympathy in our Brother's Joy and Sorrow, and a Sensibility of Mind at the Report of Cruelty, however diffant in Time or Place, the Effects of focial Paffions? Can Reason turn the Heart of the Multitude, as of one Man, at the Sight of oppressed Innocence? What poor, inadequate Ideas would it raife, by itself, of the Distresses which might demand immediate Relief! Should we not frequently pass by them as unconcerned Spectators, and think them no Affair of ours?
The Compassion which Reason might raise, would fearce excite a Sigh, or rife above a speculative Wish; and at best, it's Determinations would be too flow to be feafonable, it's Succours too feeble to be effectual :- But the benevolent Affections act in a different Manner: we no fooner fee the Mifery of our Neighbour, but we feel it; become a Fellow-Sufferer with him; and, without any Confideration of Time, Pains, or Expence, fly to his Relief, as to our own: Nor is this overacting our Part, or any Work of Supererogation: This generous Disposition, this tender Sympathy, this melting Yearning, are the proper Qualities of the human Mind: These Acts of Philanthropy and Compassion correspond with the Character of a fociable Being ; the Nature of our Constitution demands them; we only " do

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DISCOURSE VII. 265

to another, as we would, and ought, to be done unto, in the same Situation."

Hence it is manifest, that without the benevolent Affections we should be desective in the Duties of Humanity; and our all-gracious Creator, who placed us in this social, united State, hath furnished us with these Quickeners, as necessary Qualifications to it.

It would be easy to point out the Uses of Emulation, Resentment, and every other Passion; but what hath been advanced, is sufficient to establish this general Conclusion, that all our Affections are designed as Coadjutors to our Reason, and are its executive Powers in the Discharge of the Duties of Life.

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DISCOURSE VIL 265

to another, as we would, and ought, so be done onto, in the fame Simation."

Hence it is manifely that without the benerolest affections we fiscald be defective in the Dates of Hannester, and our effective cious Creator, who piaced us in this focal united State bath, furnified as with these Quickenes, as nexcline (califications to it, it would be easily to coint out the Uses of Lander west to coint out the Uses of Lander what was fight been advanced, it both for the cicuits the general Concludes that and any last what what general Concludes that our Raylor was designed as Concludes the our Raylor was the Davier of Live

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DISCOURSE VII.

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and that endeavour to prove that though the Affections cannot differently the Manner and Degree of their Propentity, nor have any Com-

AVING enquired into the Nature, Use, and End of the Affections, I shall confider the Abuse of

mand over themelves, yet it is expedient,

Though defigned as Affishants to our Reason, and in their original State, natural and necessary, yet it by no Means follows, that they will always continue such; the Injunction, "Keep thy Heart with all Diligence," implies the contrary; which the Description of their Properties confirms: They are defined to be eager and ardent Solicitors, averse to Delay, and impatient for immediate Gratification; that they strangely assume, and increase in Strength by Indulgence; and not having any Command over themselves, nor knowing any Bounds for their

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their Importunities, will, unrestrained, run into

Now, if they are capable of Excels, it is plain that they must have certain determinate Bounds, which they ought not to pass; and when they shall, they will become unnatural and unnecessary: This is an Abuse to which they are subject: and to which I expressly add, and shall endeavour to prove, that though the Affections cannot distinguish the Manner and Degree of their Propensity, nor have any Command over themselves, yet it is expedient, that these Points should be distinguished, and a due Authority had over them; otherwise they will defeat the End they were intended to serve, be an Obstruction instead of an Aid to Reason, and highly injurious to us.

A few Instances will evince this Truth, and

exemplify these Abuses, 2 languo riada ni bna

Parental Affection is absolutely necessary for the Care, and Nurture of Children, and wisely adapted to these Purposes: It inspires the selfish Person with cordial Benevolence, the timid with true Fortitude: It is most active when most necessary, and most beneficial when its Object is in the weakest State, and, therefore, when duly exerted, affords infinite Satisfaction to the Parent, and ample Relief to the Offspring: Yet this truly generous Passion may be carried to Excess, and

and degenerate into an over-weening Fondness or blind Dotage, when it will disappoint itself and produce Effects directly contrary to its Intention: Extravagant Love is more injurious than bitter Hatred: The fhort and fure Way to ruin Children is in the Breast of their Par rents, by having no Will but theirs, and being led by, instead of leading them; And what is Destruction to the one, is likewise Distraction to the other: No one can ferre even one fuch Mafter? The humoured Child, fentible, and vindictive, as it were, of the Injury done him. always returns it upon his Indulgers, and makes them the first to feel the fatal Effects of their unreasonable Passion, and unlimited Carolles: 66 Rod and Reproof give Wifflom, but a Chilfle " left to itfelf is a Shame to the Parent deshri Again, Resentment of Lojuries, or Indignation at Ill-Treatment, is a Spirit infuled into us by our all-provident Creator, as necessary for the Prevention and Suppression of Insults: We may " be angry and fin not s nay, we may do well to be angry; but we may also do ill to be angry : This Passion hath its Barriers, and there is no other in the human Breast that demands to strict a Care to confine it within them : Like Fire, when duly attended, it will animate and warm; but neglected, foon gain the Afcendant, and rage with incredible able

Fury:

TO DISCOURSE VII.

Pary: Thus Referement will swell into Excess, and become inextinguishable Wrath, Revenge, and Malice, which instead of differming an Adversary, and securing ourselves, will but inche him to renew his Attacks, and lay us more open to them: By which Means it will heap took on the Fire of Contention, and dislove the Peace it was designed to preserve.

Again, Pear is a natural Paffion, and fet se a Guard to Self-Prefervation, to warn as of approaching Peril, and give us timely Notice, o arm ourselves against it : Courage properly compounded with it, is Forthade or agrianimity and void of it, degenerates into Temerity and Foolhardiness And, as we may be too fensible of Evils, so we may be like wife too infentible of them e Fear hath both its Extremes; and, in Excess dwindles into Pufillanimity or Dowardice; it may either to exaggerate the Number and Strength of the Enemy, as to Arip us of all Refolution, and force us to forrender ourselves into the Hands of those whom we might have fubdued; or it may raise false Alarms, exhibit ghaftly Spectres, and render imaginary Evil more dreadful than real bas

both natural and necessary, may be well or ill refrected; under the Superintendence of the Understanding, it may animate us in the landable

told Parting of a true Self-Interest, and Jointy with the focial Affections, continute the generous, patriotick Character: Or, through a intemperate Zeal, it may militake Appearance for Realities; purfile the more Phanton of Pleasure or Profit, and degenerate into an abject Selfitiness, when, though higmatized, as venal, corrupt Principle, we shall be more in jured by this Self-Love, than we could hav been by Self-Harren on sie elemina mountains

From these instances it clearly appears, what the Abuses of the Affections are; it only remains, therefore, to fet before you the farther Confequences of these Abuses, and endeavour Duty enjoined, of keeping the Heart with

Whoever confiders the Affections in irrational Creatures, will perceive them incapable of much Alteration: that they continue nearly the fame as when first implanted : Providence hath either fixed them, or by his Instincts. confines them within fuch due Limits, as they rarely fall thort of, or exceed! He is. therefore, their Guide, Overleer, or Ruler : But the Cafe is otherwise with Man; though He hath Paffions in common with all other Beings, yet in a different Manner, as with him they may deviate from their original State,

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and become enormous and extravagant : They ere likewife submitted to his inspection and Care: he is Nature's Deputy in the Government of himfelf; made an intelligent Being for that very Purpole; and invested with superiour Powers, that he may superintend and direct his Affections: This is his Province; a far more honourable Appointment, indeed, but attended with far greater Danger, Interiour Animals are necessary Agents, Nature acts for them; and they are certain of doing what is right: But Man must act for himself; though his Passions are impetuous and precipitate, he hath nothing to controul them with, but his Reason; and though they have no Command over themselves, and are continually encroaching upon him, yet he must subjugate them, or prevent them from usurping the Dominion over him, by his own Exertion and Vigilance: He is in some Degree a Free-Agent; not subject to abfolute Compulsion or Restraint; endowed with Liberty of Action, and a Power over himself and his own Conduct; yet he is not free to ule that Power at his Will; but he hath Laws and Instructions given him, which he must follow; He is not compelled, like other Beings; to do what is best for himself: Happy would it be for many of us, if we were; as we have but bus

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but little Reason to beaft of our Privileges, if we make no better Use of them than to become supremely miserable; and reduce ourselves to a far inferiour Station! Which must be our Case, if we approve not ourselves faithful Stewards over our Affections: Health or Sickness, Liberty on Slavery, Happiness or Misery, are the Effects of this Administration; "the Issues of Life," which proceed from "the Heart;" of a prudent and imprudent Government of it.

That Portion of Health or Sickness; which is not necessary and constitutional, but placed in our own Power, depends chiefly on the Management of our corpor al Assertions: By Temperance we support Life, and restress Nature: Health, Strength, and long Life, result from the due Moderation of our Appetites; but if we devote ourselves to sensual indulgences, and live only to eat and drink, our Food will be converted into Fuel for Disease; the Staff of Life become its Oppression, and the Body be impaired and destroyed by the very Means designed to support it.

Again, the only true Liberty or Slavery is in the Heart, and iffuer from it: No Power on Barth em reach the Will, without our Permittion: The Mind is every Man's own Kingdom; the Affections are his Subjects; over whom he may exert his Authority, and be as

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absolute as he please: He that can command himself, and his own Heart, is perfectly free: He can discern between Good and Evil; embrace the one, and reject the other; Nothing can prevent bim from acting, as it becometh a moral, rational Being: When the Understanding holds the Reins of Government, and keeps the Affections in a due Subjection, an universal Unanimity and Harmony ensue, and the Mind enjoys all the Peace and Happiness this World can confer. - On the other Hand, Slavery is from within, when Reason doth not rule, our Paffions prevail; we are led Captive by our Lusts, and become Slaves to our own Servants: who, (when we have made them Lords over us,) will, through our Remissness, make themfelves despotick and merciless Tyrants, oppressing us with more than Egyptian Bondage, restraining us from doing what Conscience approves, and compelling us to do what it condemns: When the Discipline of the Mind is thus given up, it will be, as when there was no King in Ifrael, but every one followed his own Way: " A Kingdom divided against " itself is brought to Desolation;" the whole Tribe of Passions break loose, and rage (like evil Fiends) with implacable Fury: Each one contests the Empire of the Mind; which, in this dreadful State of Anarchy and Confusion.

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is distracted with the Contentions of so many petty Tyrants, continually deposing one another; till at length one rifes fuperiour to the reft, and reduces all the Powers of the Mind to abject Slavery; then "the Master Passion is as pow-" erful as the great Cham of Tartary, who, " for an Effay of his Sovereignty, commands " whole Troops to ride down Precipices, and " they are obliged to obey him."-" He that " hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a "City that is broken down, and hath no "Walls;" in a defenceless State; having no Security from Invafions without, or Infurrections within: "His Mind is like a troubled " Sea, whose Waves cast up Mire and Dirt: "There is no Peace, faith my God, to the Wicked."

Such are the Consequences of the Abuses of the Affections; Health, Liberty, and Happiness, or their Contraries, Pain, Slavery, and Misery, are the Issues which flow from the Heart: The Reasons, then, for its being kept with all Diligence, are obvious; the Whole advanced hath been an Explanation of, and Excitement to the Practice of this Duty: Hence a formal Recommendation of it will be unnecessary: It is sufficient to recapitulate, briefly, what has been said, and leave the Impression of it upon your Mind.

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The Necessity then, of keeping the Heart with all Diligence, or of an early and continual Attention to our corponal and mental Affections, atiles from the Nature of the Heart itself, and the Importance of the Things that iffue from it. The Affections are blind Impulses, perpetually tending to the same Objects; partial Solicitors, pleading only in their own Cause, and displaying felely, the Pleasures of their Indulgence: There are proper Restrictions for their Gratification; which when confined to, they are natural and necessary Auxiliaries to us, in the Discharge of the Duties of Life; but when they exceed them, they are excessive and vitions, and defeat the End they were defigned to promote: Reason is the Eye and Light of the Mind, to ascertain these due Limite; to difcern the Pain as well as the Pleasure; it is the Province of a rational Being to attend to both Parties; to compare the present with the future; to judge when it may be right to comply with the Importunities of our Paftions, and when to oppose them. This is the Test, which they should always pass, and no Permission be allowed them, without the Decree and Seal of the Understanding : This is its proper Office: We were made intelligent Beings, on Purpose that we might act as such in the Government of our Affections; and we ought

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to execute this Trust in the same Mannet as we can suppose Providence would have done, had He reserved it to Himself.

God hath made us Men, by endowing us with Understanding; and we ought to keep ourselves fuch, by the Use of it, or otherwise we shall degenerate into the most irrational

Beings.

Since, likewise, the Passions are eager and impetuous Principles, and " grow by what "they feed on," it highly behoves us to look betimes about us, to inure them to an early Discipline, and train them up in a due Subjection : Our Knowledge, like Charity, should begin at home: Our first Acquaintance should be with ourselves; we cannot too foor examine our own Heart, and discover what Affections are by Nature most prevalent within us: It is their Excess, which in Scripture is called " the Sin that doth most easily beset " us;" and therefore we ought to keep a first Guard, and a watchful Eye over them. The Obligations of " keeping the Heart with all "Diligence," are greatly enhanced from the Confideration of the Things that " iffue from " it ?" Out of the " Heart" flow good Inclinations, right Defires, Piety, Virtue, Benevolence, Charity, Temperance, Chaffity; out of it proceed S 3 alfo

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alfo " evil Thoughts, Murder, Adultery, "Fornication, Theft, falle Witness, Blasphemy:" Man hath fuch a Power given him over his own Heart, as to make either of these Streams issue from it: Let us, then, take Care what Use we make of this Power: Let us confider what important Objects depend upon it; Life and Death, Happiness and Mifery, are the Consequences of it. If we keep this Fountain clear; if " Judgment run down " as Water, and Righteousness as a mighty " Stream," then there will be within us an Equanimity of Temper, present Enjoyment of Mind, and confirmed Hope of future Bliss, (as a Well of Water) springing up to everlasting Life: But if the Heart be corrupt; if we make it a Sink of Iniquity, casting up Mire and Dirt, and foaming out its own Shame, then Despair, Horrour, and all the Pangs of a guilty Conscience, will arise from this disturbed Fountain:

What Bleffings more defirable? What Curses more dreadful? From the same Fountain iffue sweet Water and bitter! An Eternity of Contentment or Remorse! What, then, is more worthy of our Care, than our Heart? What can better reward us for our Pains? Here, let us apply "all Diligence;"

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nor faint, nor fail in this Duty; but, before all Things, cleanse ourselves from the Desilement of an *impure Heart*, that we may be faithful Stewards of this choice Talent, and received into "the Joy of our Lord."

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Herein do I exercise myself, to bace a Conscience void of Offence, towards God and towards Men.

T. Raul having been accused before Felix the Roman Governour, as a Mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the World, a Ringlender of the Sect of the Nazzrenes, going about to prophane the Temple; he; in his Defence, acknowledged, that "in the Way which they called Herefy, he worthipped the God of his Fathers, believing all Things in the Law and the Prophets, and having Hope towards God, which they themselves also thought the Dead, both of the Just and the Unjust; but he denied the other Pasts of their Charge; which, as they brought no particular Facts to support,

fupport, it was sufficient to plead in general, the Innocence and Integrity of his Heart; "Herein do I exercise mysels, to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God and to"wards Men."

This was the Occasion of these Words, and the Use I shall make of them, will be, to introduce a Discourse upon the Subject of Conscience, in which I shall observe the following Method:

First, I shall explain what Conscience is, and enquire into the Nature, Offices, and Pro-

perties of it in general.

Then, secondly, describe the several Species of Conscience, enlarge upon, and examine avolunto, their respective Causes, Effects, and adjustificance upon us; and make such other observations, as occur to me from the Discussion of this Subject.

And, finit, Conscience is an innate or natural Brinciple of the Mind, which acts upon any Apprehension of Right or Wrong, by raising in us a Sense of Dary, for a Consciousness of lan Obligation to act agreeably to that Apprehension, and approving out Obedience, or condemning our Disabedience to its ad bloom start and

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As the Understanding and Conscience are distinet Powers, so they have their peculiar Offices, the first furnishes us with the Perception of Right and Wrong, the last acts upon this Perception, by superadding the Sense of Duty.

It is possible, indeed, to acquire some Sense of Duty from the Powers of Reason: From our Contemplations upon the Being and Attributes of God, of the Gircumstances He hath placed us in, and the Relations he hath made us bear, to Himself, our Fellow-Creatures, and ourselves, we may attain to a Knowledge of His Will or Laws; and from this Attainment. there necessarily arises some Sense of Duty but this Sense supposes a Legislator, and an Acknowledgment of His Laws; which must proceed from a Conviction of the Mind, and is founded upon the Proofs of the Existence of the Deity, producing, in the Generality of Mankind, a languid, inactive Sense of Duty and even in the more considerate Part, inadequate to the Obstructions to the Performance with our Fellow-Creatures and but with

But the Sense of Duty which Conscience imprints upon the Mind, is of a far different Nature: We feel this Principle acting within us, antecedently and independently of any Proofs, or

even

DISCIOURSE WILL

Knowledge of His Will; the Mind no founder begins to open, and discern between Truth and Fellwood, or Right and Wrong, but Conscience exerts itself, and distinguishes between natural and moral Truths, by enforcing the larger as if they were Laws to us; or through a Sense of Duty, impelling Obedience to them.

But this Sense of Reason and Conscience will be best explained by comparing them with other similar Powers and Effects of the Mind.

For Instance; There is a Self-Love which the Distance of our Understanding, and the Sense of the Relation we hear to our selves raise within us; There is also a Pussion of Self-Love deeply implanted in our Nature: Thus, this Love proceeds from two different Causes, one Portion of it is adventitions and acquired by Reflection; the other is an innate Affection: Both, united, constitute the Principle of Self-Preservation, and jointly concur in the same End.

Again, from a Knowledge of our reciprocally dependent State, our intimate Connections with our Fellow-Creatures and the Union of our Interests, we contract a Love for our Meighbour.

Affections, which powerfully draw us to hu-

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mane and benificent Actions: There are therefore two different Principles of Humanity; the Understanding supplies us with one of them but that being infufficient of itself to answer the great Ends of focial Life, our omniscient Creator bath removed this Defect, by infuling into our Mind the ftrong Paffion of Benevolence: Thus, through a Composition of a Kind of Necessay with Liberty, we are led to fulfil the Purpoles of Providence in our Beingsmite more time eyenen snort driw you to

In like Manner, the Sense of Duty or Obli-

gation in general, is the Compound of two different Effects; one proceeds from the intellectual Powers of the Mind, and is the Effect of Reflection; but, this being far unequal to the Influence of vitious Pleafure and falle Interest, we are provided with another Principle: that infpires us with a stronger Sense of Duty or Obligation; which Principle is Conscience: a peculiar Kind of Affection, naturally and neceffarily afting within us upon every Perception of moral Right or Wrong, giving it, as it were, the Santtion of a Law, and enforcing Obedience

That Confcience is a diffinct Principle from the Understanding, will farther appear, if we confider that it is not weak in its first Efforts. hath not its State of Infancy, not rifes gradually Comfelence

to Maturity; as it would have done, had it been the Offspring of Reasoning; but it is as perfect and complete at its first Appearance, as at any Time afterwards. As it accompanies the Perception of Right or Wrong, it cannot indeed shew itself till that Perception be acquired; it will also have more Subjects to exert itself upon, when the Understanding is enlarged, and hath a greater Stock of this Knowledge; but though it may act, then, more frequently, yet not with more Energy, and sometimes with less, than it did at first.

The Principle of Conscience, likewise, bears no Proportion to Mens natural Capacities or Improvements; it is not more prevalent in those who have the greatest Share of Understanding, than in those who have the least; it doth not advance with our Acquisitions in Wifdom; but, is an universal Instinct, influencing the Ignorant and the Wife, those who are least, as well as those who are most, accustomed to close Thinking or studious Application; its Intention or Remission depends upon itself, or upon the Use that we make of it; if cherished and indulged, it will gain Strength; but, opposed and flighted, lose its Power and Influence; yet, however void Men may be of Thought, there never was a rational Being totally void of all natural Conscience;

Conscience; and though it may be greatly impaired, and for a Time suppressed, yet at certain Scasons and particular Exigencies, it will rise up and exert itself.

And again, the extraordinary Powers with which Conscience is invested, its surprizing Operations and Effects upon the Mind, so heterogeneous to the Nature of Reason, are clear Demonstrations of its being a Principle distinct from it:

How quick are its Apprehensions! How tender its Sense of Duty! What Hopes and what Fears doth it excite! How cogent are its Promptings and Restraints ! With what Self-Complacence, Approbation, Intrepidity, and auspicious Presages doth it fortify the Mind! With what Shame, Remorfe, and Anticipations of Ill, distract it! It sometimes performs the Office of a faithful Monitor, Guide, Bosom Friend, and good Genius; at another Time, it affumes the Part of an implacable Enemy and evil Spirit: It hath fuch a magical Power over the Appearances of Things, as to make Men rich when they have Nothing, or poor when they have every Thing; transform a Dungeon into a Palace; an Heaven into Hell: When we look back, and review our past Conduct, Conscience erects a Court of lustice in our Breast, where it acts all the Parts

Parts of an Accuser Evidence, Judge, Jury Rewarder, and Executioner; our good and evil Deeds are produced to the Testimonies delivered, fo clear, and floor, that they cannot be disproved to the whole Charge is fairly fummed up, and a true Verdict given; if it be in our Favour, we feel ourselves acquitted, and are inspired with the pleasing Prospect of its Confirmation at a higher Tribunal to but if convicted, we are condemned, punished, and in fome Degree anticipate the Sentence of the Alljust Judge of Heaven and Easthanes at refinet

I do not affert, that the whole Solemnia of a Trial in this formal Manner is conflintly gone; through in the Mind ; but I appeal to every Man's Experience of himfelf, whether he hath not at feveral Seafons of his Life, felt some such Transactions within him, as may be aptly compared to the Processin a Court of diounits and confine and unorth

Equity:

But, all thefe feveral Offices are performed by one identical Principle, which cannot be Reason, or any of its Faculties, but is a distinct Power, which Providence hath made an effect tial Part of the human Minds and is what we call Configence; or in the Wordstof San Paul " the Gentiles, which have not the Law, then " is, the Mosaical Law, do by Nature the "Things contained in the Laws thefe mor having Pairs

"themselves;" that is, their Conscience makes that a Law to them, which their Reason dictates to be right, by imprinting a Sense of Duty upon it; and they shew the Work or Effect of this Law or Sense "written in their Heart, "their Conscience bearing Witness, and their "Thoughts, in the mean while, accusing or

" excusing one another."

Human Paffions are at all Times strong Principles of Action, but human Reason is gradual, and at its first Dawning, weak and infufficient to superintend and controul their Impulse; and as it will not grow in Strength fo rapidly, as they may increase by Indulgence, it might by itself have been continually lofing Ground, and become incapable of governing them, when arrived at its full Vigour; and confequently only ferved to deplore the Excesses which it could not prevent; our omniscient Creator, therefore, hath been graciously pleased to endow us with the Powers of Conscience; that they may supply these Defects of our Understanding, and be Auxiliaries to it; by furnishing us with an early Sense of Duty, and quickening us to Action during its Minority, and afterwards firengthening its Senfe, and through an united Force, balancing the Weight of Appetite and Paffion.

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But it is obvious to ask, if Conscience be a Divine Instinct, converting our Perceptions of Right and Wrong into a Law, and constituting us moral Agents; if it be a providential Assistant to the Understanding, how comes it to pass that it sets its Seal to every vague Opinion of Truth and Falshood, is as much the Servant of Ignorance as of Knowledge, and renders the Suggestions of Enthusiasm and Superstition, as obligatory as the Dictates of right Reason?

To give a clear Solution to this Objection, it will be necessary to observe, that all natural Endowments are conferred in a limited Manner; and have their respective Bounds, and Offices assigned them; which might have been enlarged or contracted; but are not less natural, or less the Gifts of Providence, because they are given in a finite Degree.

Conscience of itself hath no Discernment; can form no Judgment of Right or Wrong; its whole and sole Province, is to follow the Judgment of the Mind, whatever it may be; to give a Sanction to, and instigate a Compliance with it: If that be ill-grounded, Conficience is not criminal; it may have discharged its Office, and the Fault lain in the Intellectual Part of the Mind, which may have neglected the Means of Information, and inadvertently

vertently or prematurely acquiefoed in that Appearance of Right or Wrong, which Fancy or Passion hath set before it: Conscience, therefore, may be an essential and necessary Part of our Constitution; though it may, (through the wilful Ignorance of the Understanding,) be missed; and it might as well be asked, why was not Reason made infallible? Or, suffered to misguide? As, Conscience suffered to be misguided by it?

This implicit Submission, or Subjection of Conscience to the Sentiments of the Mind, however acquired, or whatever they may be, will appear, farther, to be neither unnatural or improper, if we consider the Powers of Reason, and the Consequences of this Submission.

Most of the common Duties of social and domestick Life, are plain and obvious; written by the Finger of God in legible Characters upon our Heart, " so that he who runs may read them;" the Rules, likewise, of Temperance, Chastity, and Self-Government, are adapted to the meanest Capacity, and, in general, self-evident Principles; the Knowledge of them is intuitive, and comes as it were by Instinct; as Reason here rarely makes a wrong Judgment, Conscience as seldom proves an erroneous Monitor: In this large Extent, of moral Practice, Providence has taken Care that Conscience shall not be misinformed, and that

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no ill Consequences shall arise from its Subjection to the Dictates of the Mind:

There may indeed be some few intricate Cases, occasioned by the Complication of the various Relations we stand in to one another, which may demand some Consideration to ascertain the Boundaries of our Duty: There are also Truths concerning the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, and the Nature of Religion and Divine Worship, which we cannot attain to a competent Knowledge of, without a strict Exertion of our rational Faculties; but, the Means for obtaining this Knowledge. are placed within the Reach of the Understanding; and it is its peculiar Office, to have Recourse to them, for its Information: This is the Charge which Providence hath affigned to it; and when difregarded, it will impose upon Conscience, and make it prove an erroneous Prompter: But fince Reason is invested with sufficient Powers to inform itself, why should Conscience prevent or correct its wilful Ignorance.

And if there be no Iniquity or Impropriety in permitting Reason to abuse the Trust committed to it, and impowering nothing but it-self to direct and correct itself, then it is right it should involve every Thing subject to, or dependent upon it, in the Evils entailed on

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this Abuse; which is not only incident to Conscience; but all the Affections of the Mind: They are blind Incentives to Action, and have no Government over themselves, but are submitted to the Direction of Reason, whose Province it is to superintend and controll them; and if it fail in this Duty, they will run into vicious Excess; and though natural Instincts, implanted in us by Divine Providence, defeat the End they were defigned to ferve: The Objections, therefore, against Conscience, might be equally made against all our corporeal and mental Affections; Conscience is properly an Affection of the Mind, and acts often with the Paffions of Fear and Shame; it hath its Defires and Aversions, and can form no Judgment of Good and Evil, but receives it from the Mind, and is bound to ratify and follow it implicitly: If, therefore, this Judgment be erroneous, Conscience will give us a false Sense of Duty, and prompt us to do what we ought not, or not to do what we ought: But what would be the Consequence, if it did not act upon a false Judgment? It must either correct that false Judgment, and fo act contrary to it, or cease to act at all: In either Cafe, Reasoning and Reflection would be superfluous; we should have no Occasion to exert our intellectual Powers; Hence T 3 nay,

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nay, it would be better not to give ourselves that Trouble, fince Conscience would prove a fafe and certain Guide: We need only multiply Conjectures, and bring them to the Test of our Conscience, and its Acceptance or Refusal of them would shew which were true and which falle, and we should have an infallible Guide: We could fall into no Error. and there would be no Superstition or Enthufiafm, and far less Vice; but then the Use of Reason would be abridged, and its Exertion in moral Subjects unnecessary; we should have the less Charge committed to us; act in a narrower Sphere, and be less intellectual and free Beings; and in short, the whole System of the rational Creation would be transformed, and reduced to a nearer Level with the Animal World.

And farther, was there any Reason for not suffering Conscience to be misguided, there would be the same Reason for not suffering its Obligations to be slighted, suppressed, or over-ruled; why should it only invite, persuade, or gently lead us? Why not rather forcibly compel us to do what is right? This, indeed, would effectually prevent all Vice; but then the Consequence would be, there could be no Virtue; human Liberty would be destroyed, and ourselves become mere Machines, or necessary Agents in the Hands of our Creator.

Hence

Hence it is evident, that every natural or divine Principle in created Beings, may, nay must

be finite or limited.

Instinct is given to Animals, no farther than is necessary for the Preservation of themselves and their Species; in other Things they are left to the Direction of Appetites or Passions,

or some faint Glimmering of Reason:

An understanding Heart is given to Man, in a finite Degree; it is weak and frail; we can think and reason, but, without great Care, shall in many Things think and reason erroneously; yet notwithstanding this Imbecility, it is contessed a Ray issuing from the eternal Source of Light, by which we resemble our Maker, and are the Glory of the visible Creation:

In like Manner, though Conscience is limited in its Operations, a subordinate and sub-servient Power to the Understanding, implicitly following its Judgment, and finetimes giving a false Direction, yet it may be a natural or

divine Impulse within us.

Upon the Whole, therefore, we may conclude, that Conscience is no Mode or Effect of the Understanding, but a separate or distinct Power, and a constituent or essential Part of the buman Mind.

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Indicate is given to Asimala, no farther than is necessive for the Project ation of their dives and their Species, in other Things they are left to the Direction of Appetites of Pedione, or fome take Olimmering of Realin : 1

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HE next Thing proposed, is to describe the particular Species of Conscience, to enlarge upon and examine their respective Causes, Effects, and Influence upon us, and make fuch other Observations as occur to me in the Discussion of this Subject.

There are, then, three principalKinds of Conscience, An erroneous, evil, and good Conscience.

There are also some other Distinctions; but as they are only particular Parts or Sub-Divifions from these general Heads, their Description will fall more properly under them.

I shall therefore first treat of an erroneous

Conscience.

When through Inadvertency, Indolence, Prejudice, Partiality, or any other voluntary Neglect cations

DISCOURSE VIII.

Abuse of the Understanding, there is a false Apprehension, and wrong Judgment formed of Right or Wrong; and Conscience, from this false Apprehension and wrong Judgment, dictates that to be morally good, and raises a Sense of Duty to do what is in itself indifferent. or evil; or when it diffuades from that as morally evil, which is in its own Nature indifferent or good; or lastly, when it allows that to be indifferent, which is really good or evil, then there will be an erroneous Conscience.

If the Exertion of our intellectual Powers, for the Attainment of moral Knowledge, includes a principal Part of our Duty; if a great Part of our Conduct in Life be concerned in it, and every Degree of wilful Ignorance relative to our Morals, criminal; and if there may be fome Species of an erroneous Conscience, as bad, nay even worse, than many Kinds of an evil Conscience, then, this is a Subject of the highest Importance, and well deserves an accurate Discussion: I shall therefore attempt to fet it in a clear Light, by a ftrict Enquiry into the Nature of an erroneous Confcience, by describing the several aggravating or extenuating Circumstances which diftinguish the different Species of it, and by comparing them with an evil Confeience. Work Participation of any of

Now the whole Dectrine of an erroneous Conficience will be contained in the Explication and Proof of the two following Propositions, with the Inferences, deduced from them:

The first is, if the Mind through vincible Ignorance, judgeth that to be varong, which is in itself right, or that to be right which is in itself wrong; whatever the Intention may have been, the Action upon that Judgment will be always sinful:

The other, whatever Judgment the Mind may make concerning Right or Wrong, a wilful Disabedience to the Distates of Conscience, or

Sense of Duty upon it, is finful.

Shift.

I shall begin with the first, if the Mind through vincible Ignorance, judgeth that to be wrong which is in itself night, or that to be right which is in itself wrong; whatever the Intention may have been, the Action upon that Judgment will be always finful:

Many are inclined to think, that the Whole of their Duty confifts in Sincerity; and that if they conform to what they know, and constantly all according to the Distates of their Conscience, or its Sense of Duty upon their Mind, the Errors of their Judgment will be overlooked, and the Innocence of their Intention, atone for the Omission of their Understanding:

But

But this is a palpable Mistake, and frequently attended with fatal Consequences:

The Understanding is the distinguishing Characteristick of buman Nature; which exalts us above the whole visible Creation, and makes us rational, free, and moral Agents: The two great Objects of it, are Interest and Duty: To know and pursue those, is its proper Office: This is the Charge committed to that superiour Talent.

Again, Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, Happiness and Misery, are independent of our Will, Fancy, or Persuasion; absolute and positive Subjects; fixed and determined Causes or Effects in the Reason and Nature of Things:

Our Knowledge of them is neither intuitive nor necessary, but must be acquired by Reason, Reselection, Study and Application; and as this Knowledge is preparatory to, and the Foundation of our Practice, it must, at least, be as much our Duty to surnish ourselves with it, as to regulate our Conduct by it; and we are as much accountable for the Want of the one, as the Neglect of the other.

There is, indeed, some Difference between our Knowledge and Pursuits in respect to Virtue and Interest, which it may be proper to explain, as it will contribute to the Illustration of this Subject.

First,

First then, Providence hath made fome practical moral Truths which relate to ourselves, and are the Properties of Justice, the common Sense of Mankind: Few or none can be ignorant of them:

In these Cases, Sincerity is all required of us; if we do not act against Knowledge, we cannot act without it; and a truly conscientious Person,

is a perfectly good Man. We would will be the village

But there are some practical moral Truths. and especially of that Kind which relate to the Deity; and even some where our Duties to our Neighbour and ourselves are concerned, that lie at a Distance from us; here we are only provided with the Means of this Knowledge, and must use much Diligence and Pains in the Application of those Means, for the Attainment of it; in these Respects, therefore, we may have an erroneous as well as a bad Conscience, and Sincerity is but one Half of our Duty; we may make a bad Use of our Reason, while we make a good Use of our Conscience; or be extremely negligent, indolent, or ignorant, though at the fame Time true to our Ignorance; and grofly violate the Laws of God, while we conscientiously obey the Laws of our own Mind: Sincerity, therefore, is the least valuable Moiety of our Duty, as it may give Force to an ill Direction, or build upon a wrong Foundation.

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> Our simple Apprehensions, or first crude Ideas are rarely sufficient to ascertain our Interest; it is for the most Part, an intricate and complicated Subject, and lies at a Distance from us; most Things flatter us with the Shadow, but deceive us in the Substance: Every Vice hath its Allurement, and folicits us with the Bait of Pleasure or Lucre: our Lusts continually urge their Gratifications; Wealth, Honour, Prosperity, and most of the external Goods of Life, have their Enchantments, and powerfully draw our Affections; but though all these Objects accost us with the fair Shew of Happiness, yet they frequently palm Mifery upon us; so that without the greatest Circumspection and Care, it is almost imposfible not to be deceived; The general Connection of our Interest with our Duty, is evident ; Whatever is right is profitable, and whatever is profitable is right; but the Application of these general Axioms to particular Cases, is not so manifest: It is no easy Matter to know how or when Virtue will be disengaged from the Difficulties or Dangers, with which it feems fometimes embarrafied, and reward its Votaries; and it requires no little Presence of Mind, to suspect the Pretentions of Vice, and discern its latent Union with Misery: If, therefore, we do not diligently explore the Nature

Nature of these Things, and from a thorough Contemplation and mature Resection, establish an implicit Faith in our Duty; we shall be strangely apt to contradict in Practice, what we allow in Theory.

But however fallible our Judgment may be, or whatever Errors we may be subject to fall into concerning our Interest, yet in that Respect, this is our whole Failing; the only Extreme; though we may frequently act without Knowledge, we can hardly ever act against the Knowledge which we have; here is no Depravity of Will, or Corruption of Heart; we must always mean our own Good: be ever true to our apparent Welfare, and our Sincerity is so sure, that it is almost necessary;

Yet what is the Effect of this inviolable, unadulterate Sincerity? Though we mean no Ill to ourselves, can this Intention secure us from any Ill? Can it atone for the Neglect of our Judgment, or obviate its Errors? Hath not He who is the supreme Disposer of all Things, and made us irreproachable with respect to this our Intention, established the miserable Consequences of the Disuse of our Understanding, and can our Sincerity divert these Effects, or rectify our Mistakes? Nay, rather will it not carry us the farther from the

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the right Way, the more inflexibly and earneftly we persevere, and our Misery increase with our Deviation? I distinguit an additional

The fame Reasonings and Observations upon Interest, might be applied to Virtue, with this Difference alone, that there the Intention may be more voluntary, and the Judgment less fallible; and confequently, its Errors will be more criminal, and their Effects as fatal.

Mifery is made the natural and necessary Fruit of Vice: and Providence hath endowed Man with an understanding Heart, that he may know it, and knowing, avoid it; if then he will not exert this Power, but through wilful Ignorance, mistakes Vice for Virtue, the Purity of his Intention cannot vary the Nature of Things, or make a corrupt Tree bear good Fruit; no Man in his Senses defigns to bring Ruin and Destruction upon himself; yet he may, and often doth, through the Ignorance of his Duty as well as his Interest, pursue such a Course, as will as effectually lead him to them, as if he had designedly taken it: And therefore, either the Consequences of Things are ill set, or he may be vitious notwithstanding his Sincerity, and deservedly punished for the Errors of bis Judgment? Last M. to de villes to an interespelle estimil out our price sea ou liter as But

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But for a farther Illustration and Confirmation of this Subject, I will take the Liberty to fet it before you in a somewhat different Light.

Let us suppose, a Person to be ordered (by those who have Authority over him, and give him ample Infructions to inveffigate the Way) to lead a blind Man directly to his Home: Let us suppose, likewise, this Guide for Want of making proper Inquiries, or from an unwarrantable Prefumption on his own Knowledge, a precipitate Judgment, Wantonnefs. Indolence, Inattention, or anyother volume tary Neglect, to deviate from the true Path. and at the same Time be insensible of his Error. and verily persuaded in his own Mind that he is going right; and through this Persuafion perfift in his Mistake, and carry the Person committed to his Charge wide from the appointed Place, and being overtaken in the Night, both fall into some deep Pit, or from fome dangerous Precipice.

No one can be so void of common Sense, as not to see any Fault or Failure of Duty in this Guide: Hath he diligently followed his Instructions? Or, faithfully executed his Orders? How little Concern had he for his own or his Companion's Safety, to sacrifice it to a petulant Curiosity or a vain Considence, and destroy himself and his Follower, by his gross Negligence and wilful Ignorance? And, is it not absurd

abfurd to imagine, that the Thinking no Harm. or the bare Intention of doing none, can be admitted as an Excuse for such a flagrant Breach of Trust, or ought to have secured him from fuch fatal Confequences?

This is exactly the Case between our Understanding and our Conscience: This is blind in itself, and configned by Providence to be guided by the other, which has a peculiar Charge to conduct it aright: Reason is the Eve and Light of the Mind, to fee and lead us into the Way which God hath appointed us to walk in: If then, we wantonly divert it from its proper Office; or fuffer, through any Neglect or Misconduct, the Light within us to become Darkness, what Excuse will it be to our Master for misleading Conscience. or, what Confolation to ourfelves for walking in the high Road to Destruction, that we did not know it, or unwittingly took it to be the right Way? Why did we not know it? Or how came we to be fo ignorant? If our Creator hath bleffed us with Eye-fight, why did we not look about and make Use of it? The Understanding, as well as Conscience, is committed to our Trust, and we are as much obliged to inform the one as to follow the other: Shall we then look to one Part alone? Of punctually obey the Directions of our Understanding, and take no Care that har la the

the Directions which are thus punctually obeyed are right? Shall we do but one Half of our Duty, and suppose that this will atone for the Omission of the other, which ought to have been the Basis to it? Or shall we plead, that we were engaged upon more important Subjects? But what can be of greater Importance, than the Service of Him who gave this Guide, to direct us in that Service? What can be more becoming a rational Being, than to act most rationally in Things which concern his Duty to God, his Neighbour, and himfelf? Or, in what can his Understanding be better employed, than in furnishing his Mind with the Knowledge of genuine Piety and Virtue? This is its proper Office; the one Thing needful; in Comparison of which, all other Knowledge is vain; and when it obstructs us in the Pursuit of this Knowledge, injurious; and there is but little Difference, whether the Understanding be applied to no Purpose, or in nothing to this Purpole; in either Case, we shall be slothful and wicked Servants and an al none visit to sheet

These Arguments from Reason, are likewise confirmed by the Testimonies of Revelation; it is written, "That he who knew not his "Lord's Will, and did Things worthy of "Stripes, shall be beaten;"—here it is clearly and fully implied, that we may deserve to be punished for Disobedience to an unknown Will; U 2

and consequently, there may be a wilful or criminal Ignorance, which is an erroneous Conference, or the immediate Cause of it.

And again, we are affured from the inspired Writing, that at the last great Day of Account Men will be judged, not according to what they have intended, but according to what they have done in this Life, whether it be good or whether it be evil; that is, the Thing which will be judged, is the absolute Good and Evil of our Conduct.

Upon the Whole, therefore, it is evident, that if the Mind, through vincible Ignorance, judgeth that to be wrong which is in itself right, or that to be right which is in itself wrong, whatever the Intention may have been, the Action upon that Judgment will be always finful.

Whatever Judgment the Mind may make, concerning Right or Wrong, a wilful Difobedience to the Dictates of Confeience, or the Sense of Duty upon it, is sinful.

This will appear, if we consider that we have no other immediate Rule but this Sense of Duty to direct our Conduct by: Truth is the Measure or Standard of Right; the Laws of the God of Truth are the sole, absolute, original Laws; but they are no Laws to us, till known to us; if they are superior to our Comprehension

hension or Power, they may be Laws to other. Beings, but can be none to us: we cannot be bound by any Thing which we cannot know or do; if they may be known to us, and we. neglect the Means of this Knowledge, we are certainly culpable for that Neglect; and the Punishment may be the Consequences of our Actions on the Breach of them; but during this criminal Ignorance, they can be no Laws for us to act by; the Mind must be convinced that they are right; and Conscience enforce them, and make them appear obligatory to us, before they can be Rules to adjust our Conduct; if they have no fuch Appearance. or, a contrary Appearance, to us, and we act agreeably to those Laws, we act, either without any Sense of Duty, or against it; if without any Sense of Duty, and we only do what we take to be indifferent, then there can be no Merit or Virtue in the Action, and we might as well have omitted it: If against a Sense of Duty. though the Action be absolutely right in itself. it is only accidentally such to us; we do what we imagine to be wrong, contradict the Judgment of our Mind, and infult Confcience; And fince we are so far from knowing it to be enjoined us, that we take its contrary for a Law, and are conscious to ourselves of a Violation of this miftaken Law: we stand condemned, not only by the Verdict of our U 3 own isona

own Mind, but by Justice itself, or the omniscient Author of it; whether the Deed be good or bad in itself, it can make no Difference in our Principles; there is the same Yielding to Temptation, Contumacy of Will, Depravity of Mind, and Corruption of Heart: And, what can induce us to act against Conscience in any one Instance, where we judge wrong to be right, or right to be wrong; may have the same Influence upon us in any other. where our Judgment may be correct; because we are not privy to the Error of our Judgment. and in either Instance it will be equally supposed to be right: And, therefore, as we act not only without Knowledge, but against the Knowledge which we think we have, we are fo far from being innocent, that we are guilty of the complicated Crime of an erroneous and evil Conscience; and each of which being distinctly an heinous Offence, it will be abfurd to imagine, that they can unitedly, excuse or vindicate each other.

Again, suppose we should believe any Report to be true or false, which is the directly contrary; and vouch to another the contrary to what we believe, with a Design to lead him into an Error; though our Assertion be in itself absolutely true, yet it is only accidentally such to us; and it hath all the Malignity of a Lie; there is as much Contempt of Truth, and as

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great a Design to deceive, as if it had been false; and though we do not know that we are deceived ourselves, yet we knowingly endeavour to deceive another.

Hence it is evident, that Conscience is our immediate and necessary Guide: And, if this Argument required any farther Confirmation, it might be established on the Authority of the Apostle St. Paul, who hath informed us that we' must, not only act according to the Conviction of our own Minds, but do all we can to prevent another from acting against his Conviction, tho contrary to our own, and manifestly abfurd in itself; we must not indeed do what we judge to be evil, and wound our own Confcience, to avoid offending another's; but we must be so cautious not to give Offence to a weak Brother, as to abstain from Things seemingly indifferent, to us, in his Presence, who believes them to be otherwise, lest we should tempt him to act contrary to his Persuafion.

The Apostle hath been explicit on this Sub-

ject, and fet it in a clear Light:

"As concerning Things offered to Idols, we know, that an Idol is nothing in the World, and that there is no God but one; how-beit, there is not in every Man that Know-ledge; for some with Conscience of the Idol, unto this Hour, eat it as a Thing offered to an Idol, and their weak Conscience is de"filed;"

"filed;" that is, they act both without Knowledge, and against the Knowledge which they

think they have.

In the Jewish Dispensation, every Thing offered to God was esteemed holy; and when of the alimentary Kind eaten in Honour to: Him, to whom it was offered. The Jews were frictly forbidden by their Law, to touch whatever was offered to Idols: some of the Tewish Converts to Christianity continued in the same Opinion, and thought the Partaking of what had been offered to an Idol-Deity, an Acknowledgment of it, and therefore, made it a Point of Conscience to abstain from it, and were greatly offended with those who thought otherwise: This St. Paul declares to be an erroneous Opinion; fince an idol is no real God, every Thing dedicated or offered to it. continues in the same indifferent or common State as it was in before; and therefore, every one of this Opinion may eat of it. But when a Person, who is of a different Persuafion, partakes of it, (notwithstanding his Error. and the absolute Indifference of the Action.) he violates his Conscience, because he acts against the Sense of his own Mind; which, from the Apostle's Judgment, ought never to be done; nor even the least Occasion for it be given to another. " Take heed, left by any "Means this Liberty of your's becomes a " Stumbling=

"Stumbling-Block to them that are weak; for "if any Man see you who hath Knowledge sit "at Meat in the Idol's Temple, shall not the "Conscience of him who is weak be embold-"ened to eat those Things which are offered to Idols? And through thy Knowledge shall thy weak Brother perish? Therefore, if "Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh while the World standeth, lest I

" make my Brother to offend."

Hence it is manifestly an inviolable Rule with the Apostle, that no one ought to act against his Conscience, however erroneous it may be; that it is a Malignity of Heart of such a deep Die, as to be Destruction to the Person guilty of it; and therefore, that he himself would take all possible Care to avoid it, and even voluntarily suffer a severe Mortification, rather than be in the least Degree accessary to it in another.

And, as the Dictates of Conscience are to be obeyed when indifferent Things are mistaken for evil, so are they likewise, when there is a similar false Judgment concerning good or evil Things; because it is the same to the Mind, whether they be indifferent, good or evil; they all appear in the same Light to the Agent; and in either Case there is the same Conviction, the same Sense of Duty, and the same Desilement of Conscience, when it is violated.

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Thus have I attempted to prove both the Propositions, upon which the Explanation of the Doctrine of an erroneous Conscience depends; what remains, is to set before you the Inferences arising from them: And,

The first is, an immediate Consequence from this last Proposition. That what we call an erroneous Conscience, is more properly an erroneous Judgment; there lies the Fault: Reafon and Conscience are two distinct Parts or Principles of the Mind, and have their separate Offices; the first is to investigate and report what is right and true; the last, to receive its Reports whatever they may be, enact them as Laws, and enforce the Observance of them; they are so independent of each other, that either may be deficient in its Office, have its Faculties impaired, and its Powers loft, while the other is perfect and acts in full Vigour; and consequently, there may be a true or false Judgment with either a good or bad Conscience: when, therefore, the Laws which Conscience enacts and enforces, are established on an erroneous Judgment, it is the Understanding, and not Conscience, which hath failed in its Duty.

Another Inference drawn from these Propositions is, that while we are under the Instuence of an erroneous Conscience, our Conduct must be criminal, and Sin inevitable: By the first Proposition, Proposition, if we obey its Dictates, whatever the Intention may have been, the Action will be always finful; and by the fecond, if we disobey them we shall commit Sin, nay, be repeatedly finful; we shall act without real Knowledge, and against apparent Knowledge; and have both an erroneous and a guilty Conscience.

Since then we are under the Necessity of Sin. during this Influence, let us enquire how far a fimple erroneous Conscience is culpable, and

in what Degree punishable. Bei alto benootsd

It is written. " That the Servant who knew " not his Lord's Will, and did it not, shall be "beaten with fewer Stripes than he who "knowingly disobeyed him:" And indeed. upon a general Comparison of an erroneous with an evil Conscience, and the sole Consideration of their common Properties, without entering into the Consequences of each particular Species, there will appear to be a wide Difference between them.

The first upon this general Review, appears to be rather a Sin of Omiffiion than Commiffion; an Abuse, only through a Disuse of the Understanding, where the Intention is fincere. the Heart uncorrupt and Conscience clear and perfect. Someto bas persons as holles

- But in the other there is a Depravity of Will, a deliberate acting against the Sense of the Mind, an Obduracy of Temper, and a forcible Violation of Conscience.

The former, where the Purity of Intention and Integrity of Heart have been folely or principally regarded, hath been fometimes fliled a good Confeience: And even St. Paul himself feemed to give it this Title in his Defence before the Jewish Sanhedrim, where he solemnly declared, that " he had lived in all good Con-" science unto that Day;" if he included the Time before his Conversion, which by his general Manner of Expression he seemed to do, he could only mean by a good Conscience, living and acting according to his own Sentiments of Duty, or that his Intentions had always been fincere, and he had constantly acted, to the best of his Knowledge, in the Service of God and Religion: But it was well known, that he had been a violent Perfecutor of the Christians, breathing out Threatenings and Slaughter against the Disciples of our Lord; and a Principal in the Murder of the first Martyr St. Stephen: And the Apostle hath been fo far from justifying himself in all Respects, or vindicating his former Conduct, that at other Times when he reflected upon his intemperate Zeal, he called himself "the least of the Apostles; one that was not worthy to be " called an Apostle," and blamed the Jews for their Ignorance, "in not knowing the Righrecounsels of God, but going about to estalish their own Righteousnels, and not submitting " themselves to the Righteansness of God." But

But though an erroneous Conscience from a general Survey, may appear in a more favourable Light than an evil Conscience, yet there are various Degrees of each, and from a strict Inspection, and close Scrutiny into their several Species, and respective Consequences, some Kinds of Ignorance will be found far less excusable than others; and though an erroneous Conscience may be softened, in general, with the mild Charge of an Omission of Duty, yet in many Instances it will prove to be such an Omission of Duty, as will betray Men into the Commission of enormous Crimes, and being brought into a Comparison with several Kinds of an evil Conscience, equal, if not furpass their Guilt. and lead Find of any with well

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But chough an elienter Collainter Lann a enced these is may oppose in a more factorable Eight than an irod Confidence yet constant car file Degree of each and from a filter file fredtion and clude Secuency into their leveral Species, and respective Consequences, some Kinds of Lenorance will informed for iels excultable than others; and though an enoncous Contrience may be folicaed, in general, with the mild Charge of an Onlinea of Buty, yet in many initiaces it will prove to be fach an Omiffied of Duty, as will betray Men into the Committed of enormous Crimes, and beat ing brought into a Comparition with feveral Kinds of an evil Conference, equal, if not Grynds their Guille

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And what is remarkable of this Rigd of and distributed of the which which Men impose appearance which

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NOW proceed to a more particular Enquiry into the several Species of an erroneous Conscience, and a Comparison of them with a guilty Conscience.

The first and least Kind of an erroneous Conscience, is, when Things indifferent are mistaken, either for good or evil Things.

When Men, though having in other Respects formed a just Sense of Right and Wrong, judge what is in itself indifferent to be good or obligatory and raise superfluous Duties; then they officiously punish themselves with rigorous Austerities.

When they judge that to be evil which is in itself indifferent, they deny themselves the innocent Amusements and Enjoyments of Life; and voluntarily untertake futile though severe Abstinences and Mortifications:

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Thus, by converting indifferent Things into necessary, or harmless into vicious, they abridge their natural Freedom, lay Obstacles in their own Way, and embarras the Road to Heaven.

And what is remarkable of this Kind of an erroneous Conscience, the Task which Men impose upon themselves, is generally heavier than what God enjoins; what He requires, is natural and reasonable, and consequently easy; but what too conscientious Persons lay upon themselves, is for the most Part unreasonable and unnatural, and, of Course, irksome and painful; had the Effects of their Ignorance been confined to themselves. at might have brought a fufficient Punishment with it; the Dangers and Difficulties they expose themselves to, by multiplying or magnifying their Duty, with the Pains they take in furmounting them, and the bearing the Yoke which they lay upon their own Necks, might have been the just Chastilement of their Folly: but their Errors are not of to contracted and private a Nature; they infringe their Neighbour's Liberty, who, though he is not obliged to an active Conformity to their Folly, yet is bound to a Forbearance from Things before them, which he may think unnecessary or abfurd by himfelf, left he should offend his weak Brethren, and tempto them to defile their Conscience, they likewise bring a Reproach 2017

proach upon Religion by furcharging it, blending true with false Piety, introducing unreasonable Severities, and loading it with grievous Superstitions: Thus the Path of Virtue, smooth and pleasant in itself, is rendered steep and thorny, and the Way of Vice, from this Poil, appears broad and alluring; by which Means, many have been discouraged from the first and drawn into the last, and God Himself hath been censured for a hand Master, in exacting the heaviest Duty from His Servants through the Over-officiousness of these blind Zealots.

But notwithlanding all their aggravating Circumstances as this Ignorance is only concetains indifferent or invacent. Things, great allowance will be made for its Singerity; and therefore if this erropeous Confirme be brought into a Comparison with an evil one. there will appear so wide a Difference between them, that the former in this Light may be, and hash been filed, even a good Confeience; by the one we see more, and do more than our Duty. we are righteous overmuch, or extravagantly good; but by the other, if we fee more, we do less than our Duty; we are too little righteous, and excellively evil, in the first, we have a too tender Sentibility, with great Simplicity of Intention; but in the latter there is a callous Heart, with wilful Turpitude, and confcious Guilt.

The next Species of an erroneous Confeience, is, when through a falfe Judgment of right or wrong, the less Good is substituted for, or transposed in the Place of, the greater; or the greater Evil is preserved to the less.

Thus, the less Good was substituted for, or transposed in the Place of the greater, by many of the Jewish Traditions; their various Ablutions, the making clean the Outside of the Cup, and washing of Hands before Dinner, were more insisted upon than internal Purity. And the Chief Priests and Rabbies were held in such high Veneration by the common People, that their positive Precepts, such as stouch not, taste not, handle not, were not only thought indispensable, but it was the general prevailing Opinion, that a scrupulous Observance of these Things gave more Liberty, with respect to the express Commandments of God.

The Rites and Ceremonies likewise, which were instituted for Decency's Sake, or the Prefervation of Order and Decorum in Divine Service, however indifferent in themselves, have had an intrinsick Goodness ascribed to them, and been mistaken for the Essentials of Religion.

The Life and Substance of Holy Worship, have been placed in external Forms, suppliant Postures, and the mere Sound of Words, without any Knowledge of their Sense: This Folly

Folly hath been censured by the Prophet Isaiab, "The People draw near me with their Lips,

" (faith the Lord,) and with their Mouth do

" they honour me; but have removed their

"Heart far from me; and their Fear towards

" me is taught by the Precepts of Men."

In like Manner, the Addressing of the Almighty in an unknown Tongue, the Enumeration of Prayers, and Offering them up as it were by Tale, with the tedious Repetition of them as Words of Rote, are enjoined by a neighbouring Church, and practifed by its Members, as if there was some Charm in the very Jingle of them, or that God attended to fuch fenfeless Invocations : But our Reformers judicioully rejected all that vain Pomp and Pageantry of Religion, the coftly Ornaments of Churches, the Crucifixes, Images, and Pictures ; the Holy Water and Incense; the tinsel Trappings and antick Gestures of the Priefts; their Bowings and Croffings, with an Infinity of other Trumpery, with which Divine Worship was incumbered; and they retained no more Forms, than what the Solemnity of publick Prayers required; that the Minds of the Congregation might not be dezzled with the false Glare of Worship; the Shadow of Religion, mistaken for its Substance, or the Soul of it fifted in its Drapery. The Innocence of Men's Lives

Under this Head, likewife, must be placed the Transposition of Substitution of Secondary or

fabordinate for the primary Durine of Religion.
"Wherewithal thall I come before the Bord"
and bow myfalf before the High God ? Shall"
"I come before him with Burnt-Offenings?"

"With Calves of a Year old A Will the Lord

" be pleased with thousands of Rame?" Or ten! " thousand Rivers of Oil N Or that I give my

" First been, the Fruit of my Body, for the

" Sin of my Soul." a in its one and to abrov!

These were, probably, the Questions of Some opulent Person, who, firicken with the Gulls of a wicker Course of Life, spoked to the Prophet to be informed what Assumement he could make to the Deity; and from the Enemeration of for many Particulars probably insigned, there is confished in one or more of these Things which he proposed: But the Answer he deceived was, iff What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justy to " love Mercy, and to walk flumbly wish the "4 God?" That is, He requires nothing helder?
All other Things are only fabordinace and febferviens to shift The Offering of your Cattle accepted only as the Return or Overflowing of a thunkful Minds as the Phage of Gratitude and Obedience, but not as Graningle, or Obedience itself: The Innocence of Men's Lives

is typified by the Lives of immaculate and unblemished Animals; and the Blood of Heisers
and Sheep is the Emblem of a broken and contrite
Heart, and when these Symbols are not applied
as Means to these Ends, they are as nothing;
and when substituted for them, offensive to the
Deity: "To what Purpose is the Multitude of
"your Sacrifices unto Me? I am full of the Burnt"Offerings of Rams and the Pat of fed Beasts;
"and delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, of
"Lambs, or He-goats; bring no more vain
"Oblations; Incense is an Abomination unto
"Me; your New-Moons and Sabbaths, the
"Calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with:
"It is Iniquity, even the solemn Meeting, your
"New-Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my
"Soul hateth, they are a Trouble unto Me, I
"am weary to bear them."

Though these were Parts of the Mosaical Institution and strictly enjoined, yet, when Men made a salse Judgment of them, by supposing that they could atone for the Neglect of their moral Law, or might be substituted in the Place of it, however tender their Consciences might be, or however scrupulous they were in the Observance of them, yet they were declared iniquitous and abominable; "I will "have Mescy and not Sacrifice, saith the "Lord;" That is, I require a benevolent and compassionate Mind, and will not except of Sacrifice by itself, or in the Place of it.

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Some, also, of the later Jews were preposteroully and absurdly zealous in the Observance of some Parts of their Institutions; extremely conscientious in lighter Things, as paying their Tythe of Mint, Anife, and Cummin; and strangely remiss in the weighter Matters of the Law, Justice, Mercy, and Fidelity; straining at a Gnat, and swallowing a Camel.

Those Zealots, among the Christians, must be placed in the fame Class, who, through the Infatuation of an erroneous Confcience, prefer positive to moral, or instrumental to absolute Duties; who substitue a blind, passive Credulity, in the Place of an active rational Faith, and presumptuously rely on the Merits and Sufferings of Christ as an Atonement for their Sins, without an actual Reformation, or a real Amendment of Life.

Lastly, The greater Evil is preferred to the less, by those Persons who maintain that all Vows, whatever the Subject Matter may be. are facred; and, therefore, if they fwear not to relieve their necessitous Parents, they are bound to keep their Vow, and to fuffer them to perish through Want:

In like Manner, where the Opinion of this supreme Obligation hath prevailed, it hath been deemed a far less Crime, and probably no Crime at all, to commit the unnatural Sin of Murder, and that upon the nearest Relation, rather than break an unnatural Promife

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rash Vow, "to sacrifice his only Daughter as "a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord;"

This monstrous Error was not peculiar to the Children of Ifrael; but hath been received among all the Eastern Nations; a Vow made to any of their Gods, was esteemed so sacred, that however inadvertently entered into, or however unlawful the Subject Matter might be, it was always supposed to bind the Confcience, and esteemed inviolable; and there are Instances of the like horrid Immolations, to be met with in prophane History.

Now, if these Kinds of an erraneous Conscience be compared with an evil one, it may
perplex an able Casuist to determine how far
Ignorance accompanied with pure Sincerity, can
extenuate such Offences; or whether it can
make them less beinous than the Grimes of some
Species of a guilty Conscience; however this is
clear, that the Effects of a Conduct without
Knowledge, in many Instances may be as had,
nay, even worse than the Effects of a Conduct
against Knowledge; as the Substance of Duty
may be lost in the Form; the important Ends of
Piety frustrated; and Men become less virtuous,
or more immoral, in being more religious, or more
conscientious.

when Men judge good or evil Things to be abfolutely neutral or indifferent.

In this Class are those Persons to be placed. who look upon werbat Truth and Fulflood as indifferent Things, and round it lawfal to different gard the one, and practife the other, as Occasion may ferbestad tude classiff to smelled of of

But they carry this neutral System to a greater Extremity, who deliver the Dilling in between Right and Wrong, offers that all Things are whilly milifferent in a indeal Sense; and that Good and Duil are interesty nominal or arbitrary Fitles: It may, indeed, benjuftly questioned, whether a rational Being tan be to totally ignorant of all the Principles of Morality, as really to disbelieve, and sincerely act without them; but should it be supposed possible, then it is evident, that he who acts from this Perhiafion will be more victous, than he who acts against Species of an erroneous Conference, will, in gopictal, Be 16/8 excafable, than an enils Confeience. Burthe four band worft Kind of an erroneas Conscience, is, that, which socally inverted the natural Order of Things, and transforms Virtue Into Vice, or Impiety into Goddiness on I have

The furner Minds of Agenciance defeat the Purpoles of Religion, but this entirely fubuents them; "Woo unto them that eall Evil Good " and Good Evil; that put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness; that put bitter/for " fweet, and fweet for bitter." This is a general Aught neueral or incifferent.

Ourfe denounced against all, who make this onnatural Transposition, without any Reference to the Means by which it may be made, but the Nature of the Crime will not admit of any other Caufe, than Ignorance; to know that any particular Buil is, adt, good, or that any particular Mirthe, is not Vices and yet wilfully and deliberately to anow them as fuch, or to profess and publickly patronize them as their Contravies, is fuch a diabolical Principle as cannot he supposed to enter into the Heast of any intelligent Being , and is far below all poffible Degeneracy of human Nature . The Prophet, therefore, could only mean those Persons who contract such la false Sight or Talte, as to miliake kighe for Darkness, and fucet for bitter, or their Contraries; and, indeed, even this is fuch a monfirmus Perversion of our intellectual Powers, that Charity for our own Species would have inclined us not to have sufpected it, had not the concurrent Bestimony of all Ages and daily Experience extrates Belief, of it, from us

Though the moral and pratical Duties of focial Life, are indepted to the memeli Capacity, and made in general, the common Sense of Mankind; yet, even fame of these through the Prevalence of Rassian, apparent Interest and Prejudice, have been violated and Guston and Fastion have given a Sanction to those Violations, and even established them as moral Virtues.

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To return Evil for Evil, or avenge one's felf, of an Adversary, hath been deemed, not only a lawful, but commendable Rule of Conduct: One of the greatest Men Rome ever bred, ordered it to be inscribed on his Tomb) as an honourable Memorial of his superlative Merit, that "no one ever went beyond him in doing "Good to his Friends and Hurt to his "Enemies!" And we find it to have been an old traditionary Maxim among the Jews, and esteemed as sacred as their written Laws, to "hate an Enemy:" Which Word Enemy, likewife, was of a vague and indeterminate Import, some understood it to fignify a Competitor in any Profession or Business, some confidered the Members of their neighbouring Nations as their natural Enemies; while others included every Stranger in general under this Denomination; and it is a common Charge on the Yewish Nation, that they looked upon the whole buman Species, who were not of their Tribes, as Enemies, and treated them as fuch;

Thus Men, through Ignorance of their Duty, have inverted the plainest Rules of Morality; and from the very Principles of Honour and Conscience, have committed more attrocious Acts of Inhumanity and Cruelty, than they who knew their Duty, but wilfully acted against it: Since then, the Consequences of this misguided Sincerity

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are more dreadful than those of a guilty Mind; Ignorance, the Cause of it, must certainly be more criminal, than the violated Knowledge of the other.

But the more frequent, as well as fatal Errors of this Kind, are concerning religious Truths; some conceive such absurd Notions of Divine Worship, as to indulge an erroneous Conscience, and think Ignorance a Recommendation to the Deity; but for a rational Being to divest himself of his Understanding with a View to serve the God of Reason, and to appear before his Creator void of that Similitude to Him, with which He had distinguished him from all the visible Creation, is such an Abuse of himself and Insult on his Maker, as to have some peculiar and extraordinary Judgment inflicted upon it: And there is nothing fo flubid to immoral, or so impious, that this erroneous Conscience hath not been permitted to run into.

This religious Cloud of Ignorance is the most dense of all other, and casts more than palpable

Darkness over the whole Mind.

How gross were the Ido atries of the Heathens? They deified Stocks and Stones; worshipped offensive Plants; adored the most contemptible and noxious Animals; pay, even erected Temples, and paid divine Honours to the Diseases of the Body, and the Lusts of the Mind.

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How ftrangely was the greatest Part of the Jewish Nation infatuated by the Sorcery of this blind Zeat? The Knowledge of the one true God had been communicated to them by a clear Revelation; their original Government was a Theocracy; 'God was their Founder and their King: 'He inflituted their ecclefiaffical and civil Polity; and taught in what Manner they ought to worthip and ferve Him; yet when they fuffered themselves to be carried away by a blind Zeal; and Conference had not the Understanding for its Rudder, into what Extravagancies did they run'? They not only loft their Laws among the Rubblih of their Traditions, but even forgat God Himfelf, their Legislator and Governour; and forgetting Him, fell into all the Abominations of their Neighbours: "The Ox knoweth his Owner, and "the Als his Matter's Crib; but Ifrael doth not know, my People will not confider. They were more dull than the Bealts of the Field, and as Itupid as the Block of Wood from which they had cut Fuel to burn, and carved a God to worthip: "None of them confidered in their Heart, neither had they Knowledge to fay, T have burned Part of it "in the Fire, I have baked Bread upon the "Coals thereof, shall I make the Residue an "Abomination? But their Intentibility was fo grois, that they proftrated themselves before

it, and addressed it, saying, "Deliver me, for "thou art my God; Remember this (fays the "Prophet;) do but confider and fliew your of fuch egregious Folly.

And Persons under the Influence of this error neous Confeience, have not only fled in the Face of common Sense, and done abfurd Thinge, but been guilty of herrid and Blafphemous Impleties : And it hath pleafed the omnificient Dispoter of all Phings, to permit religious Zaul, when broken looke from the Reference of the Understanding or Superintendengi of Region to be more furious than any er funtick Pation : The Powers of the Imagination are never more convulted than when the Whind is possessed with the Spirit of Fanatición; which practifes all Kinds of Illusions upon it, enkindles en extratick Fervous in the Break of the infatuated Patient, and afforce him, it is the Working of the Holy Spirit, or a Divine Experience not to be described: Rape by this fond Conceil of Inferation, he fourne at all cool Reflection pours Oil into the Plane; and configns his Heart and his Tongue to the Transports of his wild Imagination, which he calls trufting in the Lord to give him Utterance in his Supplications and Discouries; But it is not an indignity on the common Scale of Mankind, to attempt ינטועי engaging

engaging their Attention to a wild Rhapfody of Nonlenfe? Is it not a blasphemous Insult upon the Fountain of Wildom, to ascribe an enthufiaftick Rant to His Holy Spirit; and address the awful Majesty of Heaven in such a futile, puerile Manner, as any fober Person would be ashamed to accost the meanest of his Fellow-Creatures with home nodrine

And these are not the only Evils which the Providence of God hath permitted to fpring from this Species of an erroneous Confcience 30 the frantick Zealots in Religion have still run into a greater Excess of Impiety; they have offered up Part of their own Nature, even their Humanity, their parental Affection and Love for their own Offspring, as Victims to their Religion: And the most execrable Crimes. fuch as a modest Heathen would tremble at the hare Repetition of, have been canonized under the facred Name of Piety; the Bigots of this Class have not only deliberately but devoutly imbrued their Hands in innocent Blood, in the Blood of their own Children, and thought to ferve God, by factificing their Fellow Creatures, and destroying those Persons, whom, from the strict Tie of Nature and Duty, they were bound to preferve doidw, naitanine at I bliw

These detestable Crimes are so contradictory to the common Sentiments of Right and Wrong, and repugnant to the Feelings of human Nanaire

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ture, that it may be questioned, whether fuch can be committed without fome Remorfe of Mind, or Compunction of Heart; and, if they cannot, then this erroneous Confcience will be compounded with an evil one; But, should it be possible for them to be the fole Effects of mad Enthuliaim or blind Superflition, then the Confequences of the Difuse of the Understanding will prove more fatal, than the Abuse of Conscience; and, if such blind Bigots can break with the greatest Violence the ftrong Links of Nature, and perpetrate all Kinds of Iniquity with more Refolution than any one can with his Eyes open, then Sincerity may be more wicked than Infincerity, and it will be better in many Cales, to net against Conscience, than to all with it.

The Christian Religion is a Dispensation of Grace and Mercy, by which God is represented as a tender Father, ready to pardon and be reconciled to his disobedient Children, on the Condition that they will forgive and be reconciled to one another; Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the World with the Character and Appellation of the Prince of Peace; He enforced the Doctrines of Meekness, Forbearance, and Forgiveness, by His Precepts and Example: Universal Benevolence, is the Cardinal Virtue on which his Religion turns; mutual Love is the distinguishing Characteris-

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therefore, that if any mene over scalously affected in his Religion, they would minimum the Brooks of these Viktues, and be Enthulass in Benevolence, or superstitions, in Chirise But such is the Nature of this Ignorance that it operates alike intal Religious; and Zeal when when not moderated by the Undentanding it, of that inflammable Kind, that is will take bire from the least Spart of Pride Ambition; on Etrop, and even from its own Especies in Christians, as well as Jimes of Pagans burn up every Principle of Love, and mast uncharies tably rage, even for Chasity's Sake; and, in general, Ignorance is not only the Mother of Enthusiass, and Superstition, but of Strious Bigotry, and suguinary Principles and Superstition, but of Strious Bigotry, and suguinary Principles and Superstition, but of Strious Bigotry, and suguinary Principles and Superstition, but of Strious

Buthefiales, and Superfitting, but of furious Bigotry, and languages Principles and Management Principles and It is was this blind Spirit of intularant Zeal, that first introduced Inquisition. Torture, First and Fagget, and all the degalful Artillers of Parsecution into the Discipline of the Chusch of Rome; and from the Specious, and perhaps success Pretence of saying Men's Saule, with unrelenting Fury it described their Rodies: I do not affert, that all the Sons of that Church have acted without Knowledge, it is too manifest that some principal Leaders among them have designedly converted their Religion into a Monopoly of Wealth and Power, made it a Tool to their Avarice and Ambition, and applied

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and applied coercive Means to promote their own Views: And I have Charity enough to believe, that many others are convinced of the Errors of their Church, and renounce them in their Heart, but are so circumstanced, that they dare not open their Lips against them; yet the Foundation on which their Ecclefiaftical Superstructure stands, or the grand Engine by which their whole Body is moved, is the erroneous Conscience of the credulous Populace.

Hence it is evident, that the Effects of an erroneous Conscience are elarming in every Species of it, and in some even worse than those of many Species of an evil

Conscience.

Confider then, how incumbent it is upon us, not only to do what we think to be right, but to take all possible Care that we think right; there is a great deal more required in doing well, than the merely Meaning-well; the Intention should be just as well as sincere, and we must act both reasonably and conscientiously, otherwise we may be most out of our Senses, when we imagine ourselves to be quite in them; and enormoully wicked, when we are confident that we are perfectly upright.

And, fince by one of the Propositions advanced, a wilful Disobedience to the Dictates of Conscience, or the Sense of Duty, is Sin; and by the other, if this Sense be ill-founded,

our Conduct will be finful; it follows that it must be a principal Charge upon us, to adjust the Sense of the Mind, and rectify the Judgment, to exert all the Powers of the Understanding, and apply every Way of Furnishing ourselves with a complete Knowledge of practical moral Truths, in order to give a due Direction to Conscience, and all the executive Powers of the Soul: Let us, therefore, be certain to choose the right Way; since we are to walk in the Way that we shall choose; and before all Things, let us consider what a miserable Condition we shall be in, when the Laws of God contradict the Laws of our Mind. when our Obligations clash with one another; and we live, not only in a continual Course of Sin, but are conscientiously wicked; or under a moral Necessity, and in Duty bound to do Evil.

It is happy for Mankind, that it hath pleafed their All-gracious Creator to make the common Duties of focial Life fo plain, that we cannot easily mistake them; we see and feel them too; and it is only required of us. not to perplex or confound common Sense; not to be carried away by the Violence of Paffion, Prejudice, Custom, or Fashion, but to do what appears to be right, and if we will not act against Knowledge, we cannot easily act without it:

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There are some moral Truths, likewise, which though not entirely self-evident, yet approach so nearly to it, as to be but little removed from it; Ignorance, in this Case, is generally forced; there must be some wilful Prejudice or Partiality; and the Mind clogged with some salse Weight of apparent Pleasure or Profit; and consequently, this is seldom a simple erroneous Conscience, but there is some Mixture of an evil Conscence with it.

But there are Truths, as I have before observed, which are more difficult to be ascertained, and require deligent Attention and mature Reflection: Most of this Class relate to the Being and Attributes of the Deity, the Dispensation of His Divine Providence, and the Nature of religious Worlhip: And fince we are indebted to our munificent Creator for Life, and all the Bleffings of it; fince He hath vouchfafed to advance us to the highest Rank in the visible Creation, and to diffinguish us with intellectual Powers, we may reasonably suppose, that He hath purposely placed such Truths at a greater Distance from us, that we may have the larger Scope to exert those Powers in that Part of our Conduct, which more immediately relates to Him: How highly then doth it behove us to worthip Him in Sincerity and in Truth; to serve Him, to whom all Obedience and Gratitude are due, with our whole Mind. Hounts Y 2

Mind, with all our Heart, and all our Underfranding! As Reason makes us religious Beings, so Religion should make us most rational; as we have, here, the most extensive Field of Duty to expatiate in; a greater Trust committed to our Care; and higher Obligations laid upon us to perform it; so the larger Returns of Service will be expected from us; and if we fail in these, we shall fail in the principal Parts of our Duty; and though we may come before Him with the Innocence of Babes, yet it must be a high Insult to appear as childish too.

Laftly, besides these aforementioned Consequences of an erroneous Confcience, there is another Melancholy Circumstance attending every Species of it, and deferving our ferious Confideration; it is always accompanied with an Insensibility of its own Evil, which renders it desperate, and incurable; the Ignorance which brings it, conceals it from us, and continues us in it; most other Disorders alarm us with their Pain, and make us know and feel their Danger; he who acts against Knowledge, is generally stricken with the Sense of his Guilt: Conscience probes the Wound, and prescribes the Remedy, and there may be fome Hope of a Recovery; but an erroneous Conseichee refembles a certain Kind of Confumption. which flatters the Patient, and gives him false pirits, through which he is apt to think himfelf S. COLD

himself in full Health, and least apprehensive of dying, when he is falling into his Grave: Thus the blind Zealot is a Dupe to his own Distemper, and so far worse than other Invalids, that he must first be brought to a Sense of his own Illness, and set on a Parity with other Patients, before his Cure can be attempted.

To conclude, Let us consider how dreadful a Thing it is to be in imminent Danger, without any Suspicion of it; to have the Watchman sast asleep, or announcing all is safe, when the Enemy is at the Gate, and breaking in upon us: And let us take especial Care, how we set up a false Prophet, or salse Judge, in our Breast, who will "speak a lying" Divination, and see a Vision of Peace where "there is no Peace, or acquit and applaud us, "when the God of Truth, who is greater than our Conscience, will condemn and punish us."

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otherstange health is left on the and of deship when he is his lime face his Craves District, and to far with than come farthing the life spoke has earlier to the first from the radio our Charles and active a Parity leads what Patients along the Colonia of the mentioned and interviewed parameters and proposed to the Time sometimes with the second of the second Watchings (all aftern of the constitution his have when the Endus in critical Come ond breaking in these casts which set no take all solid Care, how we had not all a traphet to be well Jodge, he our Pressly described in the half Divinguion, tendules a Vistor of Penas where the business and Property of the and applicated any rounding the Charlet Transfer and and product the harden faw the along the hards The second secon

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PART IV.

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HE next Kind proposed to be treated of is an evil or bad Conscience, which may be described in the sollowing Manner:

When Men act against the Dictates of their Conscience, or its Sense upon the Mind, and it reproaches them with it; or when through any babitual Contempt of, or Disobedience to, its Dictates, it is wearied out, and ceases from its Admonitions and Remonstrances, then they have an evil or a bad Conscience:

Or otherwise, when Men act against or forbear to act according to the Sense of their Mind, as to Right or Wrong; or when they have lost all Sense of Right and Wrong, then they have an evil or bad Conscience.

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As a false Judgment of moral Good and Evil is the Cause of an erroneous Conscience: so a false Judgment of natural Good and Evil is the original Cause of an evil Conscience: Though it is impossible in the Nature of Things, that the Way of Righteousness and Truth, can be. upon the whole, unpleasant or disadvantageous: or, the Way of Iniquity and Falfbood delightful or falutary; yet we may think otherwise, and this Thought will introduce an evil Conscience; when we divorce, in our Imagination, Interest from Virtue, and Misery from Vice. and unite what are really far remote from each other, then we raise an Obstacle in our Way which we cannot furmount; excite Diffractions in our Mind, and make the two ftrongest Principles in human Nature counteract and oppose each other; which if not reconciled. the Sense of Interest will generally prevail over that of Duty, and compel us to all against it.

Thus, when Men judge one Thing to be their Duty, and another their Interest, they bring themfelves into that milerable Condition of approving what is best, and doing what is worst. " They set up a Law in their Members " to war against the Law of their Mind, " bringing them into Captivity to the Law " of Sin: The Good, which Confcience "would they do not, and the Evil which it " would not, that they do." " a syad you

Hence,

Hence, the Want of Knowledge is the Root of an evil, as well as of an erroneous. Confcience; the principal Difference between them. is, that we are ignorant of our natural Interest in the one Case, and of moral Truth in the other; in the latter, indeed, when we are miftaken concerning Truth, Conscience is not privy to it, and we act according to its Senfe upon the Mind, so that we are in no other Fault, than of making a wrong Judgment: But in the false Opinion of Interest, Conscience dissents from, and protests against it, so that we commit a complicated Crime, and act, not only, without the Knowledge of our Interest, but against the Knowledge of our Duty; and (what is a great Aggravation,) we are conscious of doing wrong, fin with our Eyes open, and fly in the Face of Guilt.

The great Objects of the Understanding are Interest and Duty: What is right in most ordinary Cases, is plain and obvious: Here the whole Province of the Understanding is to ascertain our Interest, and which may be readily done from the Sense of Duty; it is an easy and natural Conclusion, that what is right must be prositable, and what is wrong, prejudicial; and if we would rest here and place an implicit Faith, in this Principle, we should not err, but have Knowledge sufficient to reconcile our Duty to our Interest, which is "the one "Thing

"Thing needful" to preserve Harmony of Mind, and Confistency of Action, and to fecure our present and future Happiness; but our Misfortune, or rather our Fault is, we dismiss this Clue, and bewilder ourselves in the Maze of apparent Interest; all Things approach us with a fair external Shew, and feem to propose some Good to us; our Appetites and Passions folicit us with their Gratification; every Fancy hath its Charm, every Vice its Temptation, and allures us with immediate Pleasure or Profit; Intemperance displays sensual Delights. and promises to drown our Care, and elevate our Spirits; Injustice exhibits the gilded Bait of Lucre in a fair Point of View, and flatters us with Secrecy and Impunity: With this infinite Variety of Proposals, if we do not take our Sense of Right and Wrong, as our Guide, and try them by this Touchstone, it is great Chance but we shall make a wrong Choice, and provoke our Conscience to confront us with its Obligations; and if we do not know our Interest, that will make us know our Duty, and though it may not be able to enforce its Practice, it will make us rue the Neglect of it; and this is, what we call an evil Conscience; not because it is in itself evil. but from the Evil it brings with it, as from the Distress it is in, and the Reluctance and Oppofition it makes, it is a continual Torment and Plague and I

Plague to us, and, therefore, may be more

properly styled a disturbed Conscience.

The acting against Conscience, is sometimes called a Violation of it, as it is a Prostitution of it to evil Purposes, or putting a Force upon it. and breaking through every Tie of Honour and Duty: It is, also, called a Defilement of Conscience, being a Debasement of its Sense of Virtue, a Pollution or Contamination of the Heart, and making it the Sink of foul and vitious Thoughts of samos samuelud of the bift

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But there is, likewife, a Species of Confcience, which is called evil from its own intrinfick Badness; and that is, when it is deficient in its Office, and disabled from discharging its natural Functions; and, therefore, more justly fpeaking, it may be styled a bad rather than an evil Conscience; when Men have prospered in an habitual Courfe of Iniquity, and Conscience hath been long infulted and trampled upon then it will at length become torpid and filent; the Mind, to all Appearance, loses its Sense of Right and Wrong, and feels no Consciousness of Shame or Guilt; and this is, what is called an hardened Heart, or a callous Conscience, or, to use the Expression of St. Paul, "a 'Conscience seared as it were with a hot Iron.'

But though Conscience may be thus silent for a Time, and the Sinner unmolested triumph in his Sins, yet it may be justly questioned, whether

whether it can be totally subdued and destroyed; when wearled out with fruitless Chiding. it may lay itself down to Reft, but its Sleep will not be unto Death , at certain Sealons it will rouse from its Slumber, and reasilinge its peifine Office and Power words guislond bas

When the gay flattering Scene of Vanity is removed, rand fucceeded by Infamy and Diftress, then the Prodigal begins to reflect his past Conduct, his Sins fly in his Face, and his Conscience comes forth, like a strong Man awakened from a Trance, and will stone for its past Remissions by its present Intention: Like an elastick Body which long incurvated against its Nature, will, when loofed, fiv with as much Violence the contrary Way: to Stricken with the Sense of Guilt, the Sinner recells with the Terrors of his own Mind.

When the Sons of Jucob, through their Hatred to their Brother Joseph had purposed to kill him, they were diverted from it by a fortunate Opportunity, which, at that Inftant, occurred, of felling him to fome itinerant 1/6maelites, who happened to pais that Way while Things profpered with them, and their Father gave Credit to their feigned Story of his having been killed by wild Beafts, they felt no Remorfe for this unnatural Treatment of their Brother: but some Years afterwards. when there was a fore Pamine in Cangan, and they

they having been fent down to buy Corn in Egypt for their Suftenance, were arrested for Spies, and committed to Prifon: then, their Heart fmote them, and they faid one to another, "We were very guilty concerning our Brother, " in that we faw the Anguish of his Soul, and "he befought us, and we would not hear him; "and, therefore, is this Diffress come upon " us, and behold his Blood is required of us !! Their Guilt, like a corporal Malady, which lurks in the Blood, still fickly Scafons brings it forth, laid perdue in their Minds, till thefe Afflictions came upon them, then it byoke out, and every Circumstance of their Cruelty towards him appeared as fresh in their Memory, as if it had been just done; his Cries founded in their Ears and pierced their Heart, and they charged themselves, not only with felling him for a Slave, but for the Confequences of that Slavery, which, from the Surmiles of their Mind, they concluded mult have been Death, and that the Vengeance of the Almighty had now over-taken them for it.

From this Piece of History we may learn, that a wicked man can never be secure from a guilty Conscience; and it is well worth observing, how dreadfully the House of Sin is divide ed against itself, when its Members are so far from placing any Confidence in one mother, that they cannot trust themselves: Let their helV side Number Vied.

Crimes be ever fo fecretly committed, the Heart must be conscious of them, and this Accomplice will, without any Reward, impeach them; a guilty Person needs no Accufer; his Conscience will do this Office, to himself, and sometimes to the World there have been Inflances of Confcience arrefting the Criminal, dragging him to Justice, extorting a Confession of his Villany, and forcing him to feek for exemplary Punishments without, as a Relief from the Pangs withwing Wickedness condemned by her own "Witness, is very timorous, and being pressed "with Conscience, always forecasteth evil "Things." The conscious Wretch is haunted with the Spectres that his disturbed Imagination conjures up before him; he startles at every Noise; thinks every Whisper is fraught with the Tale of his Wickedness, and that the Finger of Scorn is continually pointing at him; " every Thing, also, seems to be hung " with the Gloominess of his Soul, while his Understanding serves, like a glimmering Ta-" per, only to shew the difmal Scene, and " render its Horrours more visible."

The Story of Bessus, a Native of Pagnia in Greece, come as well authenticated to us, as any Thing in ancient profane History, and hath always been received as an indisputable Fact. It is concisely, this,

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His Neighbours seeing him one Day extremely earnest in pulling down some Birds Nests near his House, and passionately destroying their Young, could not help taking Notice of it, and upbraing him for his Ill-Nature and Cruelty; to which he replied, that he could not bear them; they were always twitting him with the Murder of his Father: This execrable Villany had lain concealed for many Years and never been suspected; and in all probability would never have come to light; had not the avenging Fury of Conscience, by these extraordinary Means, drawn a publick Acknowledge of it from the Parricide's own Mouth.

"The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, "whose Waves cast up Mire and Dirt, soam-"ing out their own Shame; there is no Peace, "fays my God, to the Wicked; his Consci"ence, (like Micaiab to Abab,) never prophesecontinually. The Spirit of a Man can bear "his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?" When our Strength is turned into Weakness, and that which supported every other Thing wants itself a Support, where shall we find it?

And as there is no bearing an evil Conscience, so there is no flying from it; when it seizes us, should we say to it, "Hast thou found

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"found me, O my Eenemy? It will answer "se Elijah did to Abab, I have found thee, be"cause thou hast fold thyself to do evil:"

Nor is there any shaking off this Viper of Conscience; it lays fast hold of us, it lies down with us, and ftings us in our Sleep; it rifes with us, and preys upon our Vitals; hence ancient Moralists compared an evil Conscience to a Vulture feeding upon our Liver, and the Pangs felt under the one to the Throws of the other; supposing at the same Time, the Vulture's Hunger, infatiable, and this Entrail, exquifitely fenfible of Pain, and to have grown as fast, as devoured: this truly, must be allowed to have been as strong a Representation of the most lingering, as well as the most acute corporeal Pains as could have been drawn; yet, firong as it is, it falls greatly thort of the Anguish of a enilty Conscience; and indeed it is not in the Power of the imagination, when at Reft, to conceive the Horrour which itself when disturbed can raise, or the Torture it can bring.

But it is now Time to turn from this dreary Scene, to the pleafing View of a good Confcionce, which is the last Thing I proposed to treat of, and which may be described in the

following Manner;

When no Opportunities or Means have been omitted for acquiring the Knowledge of Good and Evil; when the natural powers of the Mind

Mind have been cherished and strengthened; and a lively Sense of Duty is ever present with us, and influences our whole Conduct: Or in other Words.

When the Mind, upon a Review of our past Life, is conscious of no Disobedience to its Judgment enlightened to the best of our Abilities, and feels a cheerful Inclination to follow it in our suture Behaviour, then we have a good Conscience, or a Conscience void of Offence:

Or again, from our Explanation of the two other Kinds of Conscience, it may be describ-

ed negatively in a concise Manner:

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When we have neither an erroneous, an evil, nor a bad Conscience; and have acted, neither without, nor against Knowledge, then we have a good Conscience.

There are three Kinds of a good Conscience: The first is a perfect Conscience, void of every Offence, both in Knowledge and Practice:

But fince it is morally impossible for finite and frail Beings to commit no Errors of Judgment, nor to deviate in any Degree from their Duty; but to arrive to a complete State of Impeccability; so no Man can be said to posses this Conscience.

Secondly, Men in the same Sense that they may be called good, may be said to have a good Conscience; that is, if they have fallen into no gross Error on moral Subjects; con-

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contracted no vicious Habit, indulged notericriminal Excess, nor can charge themselves
with any flagrant Violation of Duty, or any
other Failings than what Mankind are incident to, from the general Infirmity of their
Nature, and have also repented of them; then
they have a found Mind, and a found Heart,
and may be said, humanly speaking, to have a
Conscience word of Offence towards God and towords Man.

Lastly, When the infatoated Enthusiast, or superstitious Bigot is convinced of his Error; or when profligate Sinners turn from their Iniquities and become sincere Penitents; and their Conscience approves of their Reformation; and their Mind being eased of its Guilt speaks Peace to them; then they also may be said to have a good Conscience.

This, indeed, is the lowest Degree of a good Conscience; it is negatively good, that is, it is not an evil Conscience; the Mind is not disturbed; its Calmness, likewise, may seem the more agreeable from coming after a Storm; and it may be elevated with some sudden Transport of Joy, in being lightened of the Burden, with which it was oppressed.

But the other Kind of a good Conscience hath a settled Complacency and permanent Gladness of Heart; which is true felf Enjoyment and solid Happiness; and which we may

call

call our own; both as it is of our own Acquifition, and inseparable from us: All other Things are uncertain and precarious, subjected to Time and Chance; many unforeseen Accidents may happen to break the best concerted Scheme, and we can attain to no more than a Probability in Externals: Even Virtue itself cannot insure them to us: Temperance is the natural Means to Health and long Life; Riches are the Wages of Industry and Frugality, that is, they will probably fecure them to us; but they cannot give us any absolute Certainty, either in acquiring or retaining them; many Things may occur to impair the temperate Man's Health, and contract his Days; and Riches may never come, or being arrived, may foon take Wing and fly away.

But internal Health and Wealth are the fure Rewards of Virtue; "Though the Race is "not to the fwift, nor the Battle to the ftrong, "nor Bread to Men of Understanding, nor "Favour to Men of Skill;" yet Peace and Satisfaction of Mind are always to a good

Man:

This is a never-failing Event; and we may fay with much more Reason than Timoleon, the Son of Conon, did, when he boafted of his Successes in the Wars, "That here Fortune hath "no Share."—Job held fast his Integrity; even Satan himself could not wrest it from him;

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though he had stripped him of every Thing besides; and holding this, he secured the Riches of his Mind, and easily supported himself un-

der all his great Calamities.

When Conscience smiles, all Nature sympathizes with it, and seems to dance for foy; "a "good Man is satisfied from himself;" he hath an inexhaustible Fund of Contentment, which sweetens every Condition of Life: tho "he appears to have nothing, yet he maketh himself rich, and possessed all Things;" and out of the good Treasure of his Heart he can surnish himself with a continual Feast.

What are external Honours but empty Titles and ridiculous Pageantries, if there is no internal Worth, and we are vile in our own Sight? Or, if this World's Goods flow in upon us with a full Tide, and we are advanced like Haman above all the Princes of the Earth, yet, if our Conscience, like Mordecai, bow not down, or do Reverence to us, all these Things avail us nought.

Though ten thousand Tongues may chant our Praise, they will sound unharmonious in our Ear, if Conscience join not in the Choir!

Wealth, Strength, and Prosperity are relative Goods, dependant on the State of the Mind; if this be sickly and poor, they will, like delicious Dainties to a distempered Person, offend the loathing Stomach, and mock the vitiated Palate.

abood:

But when the Mind is lufty and strong; when it "hungers and thirsts after Righteous-"ness;" then it hath a true Relish of Things, and is filled with Good; a good Conscience is the Salt which seasons all other Blessings, and

gives us a true Taste or Zest to them.

Lastly, to conclude this Head; he that hath instructed himself in the Knowledge of his Duty, and acted according to this Knowledge to the utmost of his Power, hath done all that can be required of him; and, therefore, God hath done all that is proper for him; He hath made the World for him, and "fet it in his "Heart;" his Conscience is, as a solid Rock, upon which his House being built, stands immoveable amidst the Floods of Assistance.

Thus I have gone through what I proposed upon this Subject; shewn what Conscience is; explained the Nature of it in general, and treated at large of the several Kinds of it; I will therefore conclude with some sew practical Inferences, that occur to me from the fore-

going Heads:

It hath been already observed, that as Confcience is a distinct Principle from the Understanding, and implicitly takes what that delivers to it, and makes it obligatory upon us, we ought to be extremely careful in forming our Judgment, and take all possible Pains to Z 3

make it a fure Guide to Conscience; since Mistakes of this Kind are of a fatal Tendency, rendering the Laws of our Mind inconsistent, with the Laws of God; and making Conscience give a Sanction to Folly, Falshood, and Vice.

To this Observation give me Leave to subjoin, that fince Conscience, whether well or ill advised, continues to act in the same Manner; trying us by the Rule which Reason hath instituted, whatever that Rule may be; and fince it is difficult for any one under the Influence of an erroneous Conscience to distinguish it from a good Conscience, we ought to be continually reviewing and re-examining our moral Principles, as we have no other Means of discovering the Obliquity of our Rule, and extricating ourselves. from that deplorable State of being under an Obligation to do evil, or being conscientiously wicked and devoutly impious: Confider, likewife, that after Men have been fanguine of their being the direct Road to Heaven, and of taking more Pains than is necessary to carry them thither, what a dreadful Disappointment it must be to find themselves irrecoverably loft through their own Ignorance, and to have been labouring all their Life-time. only to get into the Paradile of Fools.

Again, Since our most gracious Creator hath vouchiased to furnish us with the Know-ledge of the common social Duties of Life, and

given

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given a fuee Guide to Conscience in those Things, let us learn the Value of this Knowledge, and infer the Necessity of its Application to Practices and finge God hath taken Care that we shall not act without Knowledge lety us take Care that we do not act against its and fince He hath made the Way of our Duty fmooth and easy, let us not throw any Obstacles or Temptations before us, to draw use out, of it, but let us ever embrace it as, an unexceptionable Maxim, that what is our Duty.

must be our Interest.

Let us, likewise, give all Diligence to get the Knowledge of that Part of our Duty, which God hath thought fit to provide us with the Means of alone Confider that it is the Province and Glory of a rational Greature, to learn the Will of his Creator, and ferve him in Truth: Be not afraid of being overwise in this Respect; you cannot exceed; nor can any Thing better deserve your Time and your Pains, than this Wisdom, "which is more " precious than Rubies all the Things you "can defire, are not to be compared with it;" it will preferve you from the Maze of Enthufiasm and Superstition, and conduct you safely into the Way of Righteousness, and of true Religion and Piety.

And laftly, When Conscience hath got Wisdom for its Guide, then follow it wherever it may as a world to

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lead: there can be no Danger of being righteous overmuch, if you do what is right; when you have done all you can, you will have done no more than what you ought; you may be too remain but you cannot be your Mind, or when the Testimony of your Mind, or when the training yourself to have the training with the country of Offence, when the Voice of your Mind is the Voice of God, and you are really as perfect as you appear to yourfelf to be: Other Pleasures, like Flowers, fade upon the Gathering; but the Satisfaction of a good Conscience glows in your Bosom; it will yield a pleasant Odour in all the Seasons of Life, and even bloffom in the Grave: It heigthens the Bloom of Youth, invigorates Manhood, is the Crown of Glory to the hoary Head, and in the last concluding Scene, when you retire from the Stage of Life, the well grounded Consciousness of having acted your Part well, will attend you with its Plaudit, and support you with the Affurance of that grateful Eulogy of our Master, "Well done, thou good and faithful " Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord,"

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DISCOURSE IX.



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Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth; I came not to send Peace, but a Sword.

HERE was an ancient Tradition among the Jews, drawn from their Prophecies in the Old Testament; that a Messiah or Deliverer would be sent from Heaven to them; and the general Opinion, concerning Him, was, that He would be a temporal King, and make them not only an independent, but eminent people; extending His Dominion over all Nations of the Earth. The Jews had for some Time before our Saviour's Appearance, been tributary to the Romans,

Romans; and just at His Birth, the Tribute or Loan, levied on the Nation in general, was changed into a Poll Tax on every Individual, which was looked upon as a grievous Oppression, as a much larger Sum of Money was by these Means extorted, and a new Set of People introduced among them, called Publicans, or Tax Gatherers, which had the stronger Appearance of Subjection or Servitude: They were, likewise, greatly harrassed by the Tyranny and Rapacity of the Tetrarchs which the Romans had fet over them: But there was no Prospect of Redress from any natural Resource, all their Hope rested on the promised Messiah, whom their learned Rabbis, by their Comments on the Prophecies, hadtaught them to look for about this Time: Thus, their Defire greatly quickened their Expectation; and the whole Jewish Nation waited impatiently for a Deliverer from the Roman. Yoke: The Populace were fo fully poffeffed of this Opinion, that they were ready to rife, and not only join any Person who had Vanity or Ambition enough to assume the Character, but to compel bim to be their Leader, whom they. prefumed to be qualified for that Office: Our Saviour, by his Doctrine and Example, foon drew all Men's Eyes upon Him; and they, daily expected that He would declare Himfelf their Deliverer, and as his Tribe, Family, eginerio he

mily, and the Place of His Nativity corresponded with their facred Predictions, the common People immediately concluded that He was their Messiah, and could hardly be restrained from proclaiming him their King; for which Reason, He was frequently obliged to forbid the Publication of His Miracles; to conceal Himself; and withdraw into desart Places; His Disciples, and even His Apostles, were carried away by this popular Errour, notwithstanding He took great Pains to undeceive them, by expressly assuring them, that His Kingdom was not of this World, and fore-telling the particular Circumstances of His Trial, Sufferings, and Death:

Since, then, this was the prevailing Opinion, it is natural to enquire how it came to pass, that our Saviour expressed Himself in such an apparently unguarded Manner, as to countenance this Opinion by the Expression, Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth; I came not to send Peace, but a Sword: For what Purpose must Persons in sanguine Hopes of a temporal Messiah, think, He should send a Sword? Must it not immediately occur, that it would be to deliver them from their Bondage, and to erect His Kingdom? Or, might not His Disciples, when they found themselves mistaken in this Point, infer that He designed to propagate his Religion by the Sword, and farce Men

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to embrace it, and continue in the Profession of it?

To give, therefore, a clear Solution to this Objection, I purpose in the ensuing Discourse,

First, to prove that our Saviour gave the strongest Testimony, both from His Doctrine and Example, that His Commission was, to establish Peace on Earth;

Secondly, To explain in what Sense these Words are to be understood, and to confirm and exemplify our Saviour's Meaning in them;

And laftly, To make such Observations and Inferences as naturally arise from the Consideration of these Topicks.

First, then, I shall prove that our Saviour gave the strongest Testimony, both from His Doctrine and Example, that His Commission was, to establish Peace on Earth.

All the Prophets, with one Voice, declared the Messiah to be the Messenger of Peace, and that His Coming would be in the most pacifick and friendly Manner; He is stiled by Isaiah, "the "Prince of Peace; the Sun of Righteousness" (he saith) shall rise with Healing on His "Wings:" And it is very remarkable, that this Prophet and Micab make use of the same Words in the Description of the Age of the Messiah, "They shall beat their Swords into "Plough-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks:

"Hooks; Nation shall not lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more;" it will be unnecessary to repeat what the other Prophets have delivered concerning Him; I shall, therefore, only mention what Zacharies said of Him, and of His Forerunner, in his divine Exstacy, just before the Birth of Christ, that "He comes to give "Light to them that sit in Darkness and in the "Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace.

These Predictions were fully accomplished

by His Doctrine and Example:

As first, by His Doctrine He hath given us a perfect System of Benevolence, the three great Branches of of it, Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness, have been in a particular Manner patronized by Him; He feemed to claim them, as His own peculiar Virtues, and made them the effential Parts of His Religion. and the diftinguishing Characteristicks of a Christian: " A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another;" the Commandment was not absolutely new. in itself, but He renewed it to the World. both in Degree and Extent; He reflored fome Parts of this Duty, which had been entirely loft, and raifed a more lively and extensive Idea of others, than the Generality of Mankind oved-

kind had conceived from the Light of Na-

tufe, or any former Revelation.

As to the Degree of loving one another, the Christian Doctrine was, "Thou shalt love thy "Neighbour as thyself," that is, thou shalt, not only, abstain from every Act of Hostility, Violence, Injultice, 'Praud, or Deceit against him; thou shalt, not only, bear him no ill Will, hor do any Evil to his Property, his Person, or his Reputation; but thou shalt do him all the Good thou canst; thou shalt have a real Kindness and Affection for him, consider his Interest as thy own, and look upon him as another Self, or as a Member of the same Body; where there is an immediate Sympathy and Consent of Parts: And consequently you ought to cherish your Benevolence, and suppose it to be a Species of your Self-Love.

And as to the Extent of this Love, our Saviour liath taught us that the Duty of Benevolence is univerful; that our Love thould extend to all our Pellow Creatures, and hath given for the Direction of it, the golden Rule of doing to all Men as we would be done unto: "Had the Jew or the Centile been alked, who the Perfon was, whom he ought to love as himself, his Answer would have been, his Wife, his Child, or his Bosom Friend; and it would

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have been deemed a Superlative Degree of Generolity, to have admitted even those into an legual Share of his Affections with bimfelf.

Or, had he been alked who was his Neighbour? He would probably have faid his Acquaintance or his hear Inhabitant, and fcarce have included his Fellow Countrymen, or Pellow Citizens under this Character : his neighbourly Offices, likewife, were generally confined to the common Acts of Justice; but our Saviour defined this Relation to us, and Thewed as what our Behaviour ought to be to a Fellow Creature in every Circumstance, and particularly in the Time of Distress; by the Parable of the Person, who falling among Thieves, was robbed, wounded, and left half dead; this Traveller was described as an entire Stranger in the Country, and not otherwise diftinguished, than as a human Being; by Chance a Samaritan came that Way; who feeing him lie in that miferable Condition, was moved with Compassion towards him; conveyed him to an Inn, had his Wounds dreffed, and all proper Care taken of him: This Man, we are told, was his Neighbour, not because he lived next Door to him, or was of the same Tribe or Nation; but because he acted as a Neighbour, or as all Men ought to do unto one another, or as every one would defire to be done unto, in the fame Situation: and

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and we are commanded to follow his Example, and to confider all Mankind as our Neighbours.

And lastly, As Christ hath taught us with what Tenderness we should treat our Neighbour in the Time of Distress, so He hath shewn us what Forbearance and Forgiveness is due to Him when He may be at Variance with us; and his Commandment of "loving one another," is in no Respect more new, than in this particular Branch of universal Benevolence, for there is no Duty so little practised or so little understood; nor, is there any Knowledge or moral Improvement, for which we are so much indebted to Divine Revelation, as that of Patience under Injuries.

It had been an old traditionary Maxim among the Jews, "Thou shalt love thy Friends and "hate thy Enemies;" and it would perplex an able Casuist to fix a Meaning upon the Word Enemy, by which the latter Part of this Sentence might be justified; but in what a detestable Light must it appear, if it be true, (as it was generally supposed,) that the Jews looked upon the whole human Race, but the Descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, as their Enemies; or as Objects of their Contempt and Hatred. Other Men, likewise, considered bim as their Enemy who bore them any Ill-will, or did them an In-

jury;

and to infult and trample upon fuch a one when he was in their Power, was esteemed an heroick Act among many barbarous Nations: Revenge and Retaliation of Injuries were allowed and approved of, among the most civilized People: One of the greatest Men* Rome ever bred, ordered it to be inscribed on his Tomb, as the Memorial of the greatest Homour, that "no Man went beyond him in "doing Good to his Friends, and Hurt to "his Enemies."

And nothing argues more the Weakness of buman Nature, or Strength of Passion, than, that
in the more enlightened Age of the World,
when Men value themselves on their Improvement in polite Literature, good Manners, and
true Religion, it should be esteemed not only
a Sign of a pusilanimous and mean Spirit to forgive an Injury, but a fashionable Point of Homour to put a Man's Life to extreme Hazard
for the Sake of shewing the bigbest Resentment
of the slightest Affront:

But our Saviour hath taught us a different Lesson; His Instructions are, "Love your Ene-"mies; bless them that curse you; do good to "them that hate you, and pray for them who "despitefully use you, and persecute you:"

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And when He had inculcated this new Doctrine of Forgiveness to His Disciples, St. Peter imagining that His Patience was to be temporary; and wanting to be informed how long it should continue, inquired of our Saviour, saying, " How often shall I forgive my Brother if he " offend against me? Shall I forgive him until " feven Times?" As if that had been a great Number; and he thought it would be then, high Time to give a Loofe to his Resentments But this great Reconciler of Mankind, replied, "Thou shalt forgive him until seventy Times " feven;" that is, until the Forgiveness hath been for often repeated, as to make it habitual to you, and extinguished every Spark of Revenge. And laftly, Christ well knowing the Reluctance of our Nature to the Practice of this Duty, hath enforced it through the powerful Motive of Self-Interest, by reminding us of the grievous Offence which we daily commit against our Creator, and affuring us, that though me fland infinitely more in Need of Forgiveness from Him, than our Brother can from us; yet our larger Debt will be remitted to us, if we will remit the less to our bothers and life hath also made it a Condition in our asking Forgiveness of God, that our "Trespasses " against Him may be forgiven in the same " Manner. SaA

Manner, as we forgive them that trespais " wited at the Attont the Semme "au finished ?

- Our Saviour, likewife, manifelted Himfelf as the Prince of Peace, by practifing what He taught, and exemplifying in His Life and Actions, those noble Doctrines of universal Benevolence in all its Branches: it male to

He was courteous, affable, and obliging to all Mankind: He behaved toward His Difciples as His Equals; He converfed with them in a familiar Manner; thewed a most affectionate Regard for them, and received them as His intimate Friends, He condescended, to wash His Disciples Feet, ion Purpose to fet them an Example of Humility, mutual Service, and Submission: He was full of Mercy and Compassion; relieved the Distresses of the Indigent, and healed all Manner of Difeales, without any Distinction of Persons; removed both mental and corporal Diforders, and was the Phyfician of the Soul, and the Saviour of the Body; and when He was centured for affociating with Publicans and Sinners, He juftified Himfelf by His Charity; that He could there do the greateft Good, and that they stood most in need of His Affiftance at affice to the last and and affirm

He never offered any Violence, not even in His own Defence; and gave a remarkable Teftimony of His Avertion to all vindictive Means, bluow Aa2

in His reply to two of His Disciples; who, irritated at the Affront, the Samaritans had thewn Him, folicited "Fire from Heaven to con-"Jume them, as Elias did;" but He rebuked them with fome Warmth, "ye know not, "what Manner of Spirit ye are of; the Son " of Man is not come to destroy Men's " Lives, but to fave them " And, when He was affaulted and feized by the Rabble, and one of His Hisciples drew a Sword in His Defence, our Saviour reproved him; He could eafily have repelled Force by Force, but He entertained no Thoughts of Reliftance; as He had hitherto been patient and forbearing, to He persevered in the full Display of these Virtues under the fevereft Trial : nothingled beat

And as He offered no Violence in the Defence of His Person, so He used no coercive Means in the Promulgation of His Gospel; He taught indeed with Authority; but it was the Authority, which His superiour Wissom and Love inspired, for the Conviction of His Hearers; He did not press His Doctrines with an unbecoming Freedom, or attempt to make Proselites by any rude Solicitations; but His Addresses were adapted to His Instructions, easy and engaging; formed from a full Sense of their Truth, and an earnest Desire for the Good of others; and when any turned away and would

would not regard Him, He did not follow them with an opprobrious or angry Invective; but as a Friend, lamented their Blindness to their own Interest.

In like Manner, as Men voluntarily engaged under His Banners, so they had free Liberty to leave His Standard, whenever they pleased; as He forced none into His Service, so he compelled none to continue in it: And when many of His Disciples were offended at His Preaching, and walked no more with Him, He made only this Remark, that "he "who setteth his Hand to the Plough and "looketh back," is not fit to be a Minister to propagate the Christian Religion.

Hence it is manifest, that Christ gave the strongest Assurance, both from His Doctrine and Example, that the Commission He came to execute, was to establish Peace on Earth. I proceed, therefore, to explain in what Sense the Words of my Text are to be understood, and to confirm and exemplify Our Saviour's Meaning in them.

Christ, in the Chapter, whence my Text is taken, is giving a Commission and Charge to His Apostles; Part of which, such as the Preaching of the Gospel to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, the Gist of Elocution, the Power of working Miracles, their Inattendant

tion to the Provision for their Embassy, were relative to the Apostles, or the first Ages of Christianity; but the other Parts are general Predictions of what would come to pass at several Ages of the Church, with standing Instructions to the Ministers of the Gospel in every Period : Of this Kind, is the Sentence of my Text; our Saviour informs His Disciples what will befal them in the Course of their Ministry, and how they must behave under it: " Behold, (fays He) I fend w you forth as Sheep, be ye innocent as " Lambs, and harmless as Doves;" of a mild and pacifick Temper, not using any offenfive or defensive Weapons; but avoiding your Perfecutors, by flying from City to City:

But though you are not to refift, yet you will be much refifted; and you are fent into the midst of. Wolves who will seek to devour you; though sent as Friends, you will be received as Enemies, and hated of all Men for my Sake; as they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, so will they also call them of his Houshold; and Men's Prejudices against me will be so strong, as to suppress their natural Affection for their nearest Relations, who shall be my Disciples; and will prosecute them as the vilest Criminals; "Brother will deliver "up Brother to Death; the Father his Child; "and

" and the Children will rife up against their " Parents, and cause them to be put to Death; " think not, therefore, that I am to send Peace " on Earth:" The whole Tenor and Drift of our Saviour's Discourse, is an Explication of this Sentence.

Though the fairest Proposals are offered by an offended Deity to sinful Creatures; though they are tendered in the most obliging Manner, and by a Person of the highest Character sent on Purpose from Heaven; Yet the Goodness of these Overtures, or the Compassion of Him who vouchsafes to make them, will not prevent them from being indignantly spurned at; nor can the Dignity of the Messenger charged with them, His affectionate Love for Mankind, or His infinite Condescension in shewing it, secure Him or His Servants from being treated with the utmost Indignities, and persecuted in the most attrocious Manner:

What Causes could, and actually did produce such strange Effects, is a Subject worthy of our Enquiry, as it will set before us the Degeneracy that human Nature is capable of falling into; and as the exemplifying this Degeneracy by real Facts, will abundantly illustrate this Expression of our Saviour, and reconcile it with the Character of the Prince of Peace, and the Saviour of the World.

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The principal efficient Caufes then of this Degeneracy, were the Power of Habit, the Prejudice of Education, Pride, Ambition, and apparent Intereft. I best world to the state of the

The first Cause was the Power of Habit or the Prejudice of Education; whatever Opinions are fown in the Mind at the early Seafon of Life, will strike such deep Root that the Power of Truth with the Affiftance of Reason, and the strongest Evidence, can feldom eradicate them. compil mentinguil ao

When Solon, the famous Athenian Legislator, reproved a Citizen for indulging himself in fome trivial Offences, he excused himself by faying, " They were small Things;" true, (re-" plied Solon) the Things themselves are small, " but Custom is a great Thing:" " Custom, (fays a celebrated Author ,) is a violent and treacherous School-Miftress, who by little and little, flyly and imperceptibly flips in the Foot of her Authority, and having by a gentle and humble Beginning with the Benefit of Time fixed it, the unmalks a furious and tyrannick Countenance, against which we have not the Courage or Power to lift up our Eyes." Thus, Error of every Kind once introduced, will by Degrees establish itself, the total case is actionally and the special of

Sir William Temple.

and be supported by Prescription: But a religious Prejudice, and especially that contracted by Education, and confirmed by Tradition, is of all others the most obstinate.

A fecond Caufe was Pride: " Seeft thou a Man wife in his own Conceit, there is more " Hopes of a Fool than of him ";" he that hath no Depth of Understanding may be senfible of his Ignorance and willing to learn; and there are few fo shallow, as not to be capable of some Instruction; but it is impossible to convey any Knowledge into them who overflow with their own Sufficiency; their Vanity supplieth all Defects, and they are wifer " than " feven Men who can render a Reafon:" There is nothing so wilful as a proud Person; he will hug his Opinion, however monstrous it may be, and it is as dangerous " to rob a Bear of her Whelps," as to offer at taking away from him his Conceit of himself; " Proud and haughty Scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud Wrath Ploved ; motogoal act :

Again, The Passion of Pride is generally accompanied with Ambition; they naturally lead in each other; and he that is too proud to stoop to any one, is ambitious of having all the World submit to him: Power is an

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infatuating Object; the Defire of it an univerfal Passion; and will move Heaven and Earth for its Gratification; when Men are once invested with Authority, they will not so much consider what it is, or how they came by it, as how they may preserve or enlarge it: And, as Religion, is in most Countries interwoven with the State, and the ecclefiastical and civil Polity are intimately connected, every Innovation in the one will be deemed Faction and Sedition in the other; and the Magistrate, for his own Sake, will not fuffer any Change in Religion; hence, the groffest Absurdities of Enthusiasm or Superstition, when once established, will be strongly guarded by Ambition, and have, like the Tree of Life, a flaming Sword turning every Way to defend it.

The last Cause of the Perversences and Opposition of Mankind to the truth, is apparent Interest, the strongest Principle in human Nature: which biases the Will, and corrupts the Judgment; inverts the Appearance of Things, and turns Good into Evil, and Evil into Good; there is nothing can withstand its Power; the Ties of Duty and Conscience are as easily broken by it, as Threads of Tow when touched by the Fire; there is no reasoning with Men against their Interest; they will not be talked out of their

Livelihood;

Livelihood; what maintains them, however abfurd, they will maintain in its Turn: Whatever Credentials then, the Reformers of Mankind may bring of their Miffion, or whatever Proofs they may give of a Divine Revelation, yet, if Men be possessed with an Opinion of its being prejudicial to them, they will be violently set against it, and look upon such Reformers as their greatest Enemies, undermining their Interest, and working their Destruction,

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AVING given the general Causes of the unnatural Opposition which both Jew and Gentile made against our Saviour, and the Propagators of His Gospel, I proceed to exemplify this Opposition. The Jews, at the Time of our Saviour's Appearance upon Earth, were wrapt up in the Opinion that their Messiah would be a temporal Prince, and not only deliver them from the Roman Yoke, and restore the Sceptre to Ifrael, but that his Government would be univerfal, both as to its Extent and Duration; when, therefore, their chief Priests and Elders found that Jesus Christ declined all regal Pomp and Power, and declared that His Kingdom was not of this World; when they faw Him destroying their Traditions, refining their moral Law.

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Law, and turning their thoughts from an Earthly to an Heavenly Canaan; they foon perceived, that if he succeeded, all their towering prospects would vanish, the whole Jewish Oeconomy be brokens and their Sanhedrim dissolved: The Apprehensions of this Revolution awakened their Jealoufy; their Prejudice and Pride raised an inextinguishable Spirit of Rancour and Revenge against Him; as He predicted no Good to them, they inferred that " no Good could come out of " Nazareth:" Though " He spake as never Man fpake," yet their Ears were flopped, and their Hearts hardened against Him; and when they could not disprove His Miracles, they blafphemed the Hoty Spirit which wrought them, by afcribing them to the Power of Beeksehub; they first determined to destroy. Him, and then racked their Inventions for Means to execute their Delign for this End they endeavoured to enfrare Him in His Talk, and draw Him into treasonable Speeches against the Roman Emperor ; and when these Assempts had failed, they suborned Witnesses to charge Him with them; and had Him condemned, and put to the most ignominious and painful Death, for fetting up Himfelf as the King of the Tews, when their real Objection against Him was, sill revine their Traditions, refining their moral

Law.

His Disqualification for, and Renunciation of

Thus, the Saviour of the World fell a Victim to the Pride and Prejudice of the Jews: Thus fell St. Stephen and St. James, with many others who suffered Martyrdom in the first Perfecution that raged immediately after His Death, upon His Disciples in Jerusalem, and all the Country subject to the Jurisdiction of the High Priest and Elders, who issued out their Warrants for apprehending and stoning all who were found in that Way.

When the Apostles Commission was enlarged, and they were ordered to preach to the Gentiles, they soon found that the like Principles of Pride, Education, Ambition, and Interest, operated as strongly in them as in the Jews; and that the Zealots for the Pagan Superstitions were more numerous, and not less violent, than the Rulers of the Synagogue.

When St. Paul, by his Miracles and Preaching, had made many Converts at the City of Ephefus, one Demetrius, a Silversmith, was greatly disturbed at it, and convened his Brethren of like Occupation, who made Shrines for Diana, which brought them no small Gain; and addressed them in this Manner; "Ye see, "that not only at Ephesus, but almost throughmout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and "turned

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" turned away much People, faying, that they are no Gods which are made with Hands, so that not only this our Craft is in danger to be fet at nought, but the Temple of the great Goddes Diana despised, and her Magnissence destroyed, whom all Asia and the World worship: When they heard these Sayings, they were full of Wrath, and cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" and the Tumult increased until the whole City was in an Uproar, and had they found Paul, they would have torn him in pieces.

Interest, the most watchful and jealous Principle, first took the Alarm; the Silversmith soon perceived the Consequence. should this new Religion prevail, and he communicated his Fears to his Fellow-Artizans: Our Craft, (says he,) is in danger;" we shall lose our Business, and, with it our Bread; This he first urged as the weightiest Argument, and then supported it with the general Worship of the Goddes, and the Magnificence of her Temple: which had an immediate Effect upon the Craftimen; but they were obliged to conceal this interesting Motive from the Populace. and instigate them with the Exclamations. adapted to their Prejudice, " Great is Diana of the Epstans ad subside I to vino son tads,

A out all Alia, this Paul hath perioaded and

Lionius "

It would be easy to multiply historical Facts of this Nature; but as these are Principles common to Persons of all Religious; and similar Causes cannot but produce similar Effects, it will be unnecessary to shew that the first Christian Preachers met with like Opposition

in other Cities, as they did at Epbesius.

But these were not the most dreadful Enemies they had to encounter; there were others who had more Power in their Hands, and Malice in their Hearts; I mean the Priests who prefided in the Pagan Temples, and delivered out their Oracles, together with the Augurs, Diviners, Soothfayers, and all who had been initiated in their facred Mysteries, or devoted to their religious Service: The civil Power, in many Countries, was either in whole or in part vested in them; and the Zeal which Education and Interest enkindled, was inflamed by Ambition; though the Gentiles had a Multitude of Gods, and in different Places were distinguished from one another by their Mode of Worship, as much as from the Christians, yet they all united as one Man, to repel their common Enemy; and being armed with the Sword of the Magistrate, gave no Quarter to the new Sect of the Nazarenes: Most of the Apostles, many of their Successors, and the primitive Fathers of the Church, who Bb had siett.

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had Refolution enough to preach its Doctrines, or openly espouse them, suffered Martyrdom in different Parts of the World; and the Church was fcarce free from Perfecution, during the three first Centuries after the Death of Christ then it was that Families were divided within themselves a Part of them were for, and Part against the Christian Religion; and the Prejudice of those who were against it, was so Arong, as to suppress their natural Affection for their nearest Relations; the greatest Poes the Profelytes had, were those of their own House-hold; "Brother delivered up Brother to " Death; the Father his Child; the Children " role up against their Parents, and caused them to be put to Death; and Christians " were hated by all Men for their Mafter's Sake. As I set bee a sell on boffer had no to

But all these long and violent Efforts to subdue the Christian Religion, proved ineffectual; the more it was oppressed, the stronger it grew; and the oftener its Limbs were cut off, the fafter they multiplied; " the Blood of the Mar-"tyrs was the Seed of the Church;" fo that when we reflect upon the Power and Acrimony of its Adversaries, and its own naked and unguarded State, we cannot avoid making the fame Conclusion from the Event, as Gamaliel did from the Idea of it, That if

this

this Work had been of Man, it had come to nought; but as it could not be deflroyed, it must have come from God: Under the Propertion and Blessing, therefore, of Divine Properties, it triumphed over the Sons of Violence; the Pagan Temples were deserted; their Oracles ceased; Multitudes slocked into the Christian Fold, and Emperors became its nursing Fathers.

As the Sword which had been a long Time drawn was now theathed, we might flatter ourselves that here was a Termination of our Saviour's Prediction; and that He would be now no more the Object, than He had been the efficient Cause of Violence and Persecution; who would not suppose but Christianity would preferve itself by the same mild and gentle Means, through which it had made its Way in the World? That it would ; foread its Olive-Branch over all the Earth; that the Reign of universal Benevolence was commencing; that the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace was chablished, and that all Men would now diftinguish themselves by their mutual Love, Patience, and Porgiveness, as his Subjects?

But alas! This prophetick Declaration of our Saviour was not yet accomplished; nay, so far from it, that what had happened, was only a Prelude to what was so come, and B b 2 Christ

Christ seemed now in a peculiar Sense, " to fend a Sword upon Earth;" as henceforward, it was drawn by the Profesiors of His Religion, as an offensive Weapon, and for its Sake of ent ravo bencoment it so soldly

While Christianity struggled under Persecution, there were few Converts who were not fincere Believers; and, as eminent Posts in the Church were in imminent Danger, none but the zealous for their Religion, the firmly attached to it, and the foremost to feal their Faith with their Blood, were promoted to our divisor's Prediction; and that He smath

But when it became the established Church, endowed with temporal Revenue; and Wealth and Power began to flow, with a full Stream. into it; then Men began to be Christians, for the same Reasons as they had been Pagans or Jews: Some were such by Birth and Education; others found their Interest in it; or, embraced it as the short and certain Road to Honour and Dignity; and Bigotry, Avarice, and Ambition foon followed, which excited as furious Zeal in the Heart of the Christian. as ever raged in the Break of the Jew or But Mal This prophetick Declarate pling

These, indeed, only persecuted those who were of a different Religion from themselves; but Christians, more savage than brute Crea-Bbz Christ

tures.

tures, worried Christians; and they who were of the same Household of Faith, were more fet against one another, than against Aliens or Infidels; a Difference of Sentiment necessarily sprang from a fallible Judgment in all Ages of the Church; but in the primitive Times, it feldom made any Breach in Mens Affections: Christians considered themselves as Fellow-Travellers, passing through the Wilderness of the World to the Heavenly Canaan; their Road was chalked out before them, and Love and Friendship enjoined them; they had no Temptation to difagree by the Way; and when any deviated from the straight Path, their Brethren compassionated, and endeavoured to recover them, with the Spirit of Meckness: Their common Dangers and Difficulties confirmed the Band of Union, which their Religion had formed: But when Christianity began to have the fair flattering Promise of this World, as well as of the next, then Men began to make a Trade of Religion, and turn Godliness into Gain; then the Lust of Rule began to shew itself, and soon begat mutual Animosity, Envy, and Hatred; Christians grew jealous of one another; formed themselves into Parties; and different Sects became religious Factions; each idolized its own Opinion, and was boistas Bab 3 1 bas soon Wankind,

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for making all others full down and worthin it; thus, when the Church had nothing to feat from without, it became diffracted with interdal Broils: Dill at length one role up, and like depen's Rod, absorbed the reft: This transformed the whole Christian Scheme intella Plan for monopolizing Wealth and Power and wrested every Part of it linto Means for enguofing them! But as its original Institutes were but ill calculated for erecting a temperal Kingdom they were in a great Measure fupspecified and dupplanted by enditionary Doc mines, betten calculated to viewe the Ends of Avarice and Ambition vis All Oppofers of Reformers were branded as Schifmaticks of Here? ticks. Names made to country the Ideas of the blacketto Crimes all and to which no Punith ment could be integuate: They were interdicted, execution indicated indelivered cover to merettels Tormentors in this World and the Powers of Darkness in othe mext, then them added is low

Hence 5 Obnistianity was subjected to the Fate of that Species of Vipers, which have their Bowels torn out by those that spring from them," and the Religion which breathed nothing but Gentleness, Forbearance, and Patience, which contained a refined System of Benevolence; and whose principal End was to establish Peace and Harmony among Mankind, proved

proved the unhappy Occasion of implacable Hatred and dire Cruelty: Men, for Charity's Sake, became most uncharitable; none were more furious, than superstitious and enthusiastick Bigots; religious Wars were most fanguinary; and holy Leagues gave Sanction to horrid Maffacies: Croifades were undertaken, for the forcible Recovery of the Holy Land; and an Order of Knights-creant was instituted, as the sworn Enemies to Peace, to vow perpetual War with Unbelievers; and fastly, the pious Fathers of the Church let up, in all Countries where their Power reached, the Inquisition, an ecclesiastical Engine to demolish Herefy, and preserve an Unity of Opinion, by delivering to the Flame all, whom, they suspected to differ from them in Sentiment : notes agril a been hed blood

Christianity, from the Behaviour of those, whose Zeal, instead of being tempored by Love, was instanced by Bigotry, Pride, and Ambition; what could be inserted, but that the Spirit of Persecution was the Spirit of this Religion; that " its Injunctions, like " Draw's Laws, were written with Blood, " and not with Ink;" that Malevolence to all Mankind, and especially to one another, was the Characteristick of its Disciples; and that

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were fent to " destroy Men's Lives, and not to: " fave them." early to well die bons " made home I

These are the Ways, by which four Saviour came to fend a Sword, and not Peace "upon Earth;" He foresaw what Opposition He and His Apostles would meet with, and He seems to call Himself the Author of this Opposition; but He was in no other Respect the Author of it, than being the innocent Means of irritating Men's unruly Passions; He was for far from drawing the Sword, or commanding His Followers to draw it, that both He and they were all Submillion; neither provoked He others to draw it; unless the Publication of the Gospel of Peace, and the Demonstration of cordial Friendship to Mankind, could be deemed a Provocation; He was to far indeed the Cause of Opposition, that had He not come. He could not have been opposed; or, had not the Sun of Righteousness arisen, there could not have been any Contention between the Light of the Gospel and the Darkness of Ignorance and Vice 79 7 to single of

It was either the peculiar Idiom of the Hebrew Language, or the common Phraseology among the Jews, to put a remote incidental Circumstance, for the primary, effective Couse: Our Saviour made use of this Figure of Speech inth 7.4.1

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on other Occasions, and several Instances of it might be produced from the Holy Scriptures;

but one or two will fuffice. The unbelieving Jews fays, " if I had not done among them the "Works which no Man ever did, they had "not had Sin " Had He not lain before them the Means of Conviction, they could not have been guilty of rejecting them; and, as His extraordinary Works were these just Means, they were a remote Cause of their Sin; but the real and proximate Caule, was their invincible Prejudice; and as far as an obstinate Will, or, a corrupt Heart, without any Opportunity of thewing itself in Act, could have rendered them guilty, fo far had they finned, had He never appeared among them; but when He came, and gave such full Proof of His Divine Commission, their Insidelity was manifest; they had no Subterfuge, no Veil for their Singer of has

Again, it is written, "By the Law is the " Knowledge of Sin; I had not known Sin, " except the Law had faid, thou shalt not " covet:" The Apostle did not mean that the Law was the real efficient Cause of Sin, or that it could beget a criminal Knowledge of it; there had indeed been no Transgression, had there been no Law; no unlawful Lufts, and the Breds of Pence and not latten upon

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had there been no lawful Defire; but the Law doth not impel or tempt any Man to fin, by interdicting it; Inconfideration, a petulant Paffions, are the Parents of Luits: Had there been no Food, no Appetites, or no Rules for moderating them, there had been no Intemperance: Yet not thefe Provisions, or these Restraints, but the wilful Abuse and Contempt of them, constitute the Sin of they were a remote Cause of their sonersquisting

In like Manner, Christ " came not to fend "Peace on Earth;" for had He not come, there could not have been a Sword drawn against Him; the Ignorance, Depravity, and Perversence of Manking were to great, that no Reformation could have been attempted without giving Offence, or filtring up an Opposition to it; He clime, therefore, to give this Offence; and to expele Himfelf and His Disciples to the Malevolence of those, whom Prejudice, Pride, Ambition, and Averice might incente against them; but neither His Advent nor their Million, but the Depravity of Mankind, was the true and effective Causes of all the Diforders that actended the Establishment of the Christian Religion; Had Men's Hearts been cleared from all noxious Weeds, and prepared to receive the Word, the Seeds of Peace had not fallen upon a stony

a stony Soil, nor among Briars and Thorns; but fown in good Ground, produced, in great Abundance, the Fruits of Love: Then, instead of Glaspheming and crucifying the Prince of Peace, and perfecuting and destroying His Ministers, they would have received them as their Friends, and glorified God for His superlative Goodness to them: Then Christians, instead of falling upon one another, had been as patisfick as Lambs, and made one Fold under one Shepherd; and it would have appeared to all the World, that Christ came to send Peace, and not a Sword upon Earth.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain, confarm, and exemplify our Saviour's Meaning in these Words.

The remains, therefore, in the last Place, to make such Observations and Inferences as naturally write from the Explication and Discussion of this Subject.

And, the first remarkable Thing that prefents itself, is, the Ignorance of Frailty of buman Nature.

We are strangely apt to plume ourselves upon being rational, moral, and free Agents, and to boast of our Superiourity to all visible Beings: But bow doth this appear? From our Asions? Do we behave like rational Beings? Are we not Slaves to Passion?



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Is our Understanding free? Are we open to Conviction? Are we not easily deceived by the false Appearance of Interest? And doth not this raise a Prejudice which will deaden all Arguments directed against it?

What can be a stronger Demonstration

than the Instance before us? as ababall und

The Son of God came from Heaven to restore Mankind to the Knowledge and Practice of their Duty; to reconcile them to God and to one another; He brought with Him all the Credentials of a Divine Mission; the Prophecies concerning the Melliah were accomplished in Him : His Miracles were incontestable Proofs of supernatural Power, and transcendent Goodness: His Doctrine was perfective of human Nature, and worthy of unerring Wisdom to communicate; and His gracious Terms of Salvation demanded our ferious Attention, and willing Acceptance; vet, with all thefe fair Appeals to the Senses and Understanding delivered in a courteous Manner, His Overtures were rejected with Difdain, His Servants abused, and He Himself insulted, and put to an ignominious Torture: How shall we tocount for this Conduct ? There was nothing wanting on his Part; the Fault, must have lain on the Part of Mankind, their Eyes were

were closed, and their Hearts hardened the Power of Truth could make no Impreffion upon them; they would not be convinced; they were fettered by their Passions, and enamoured with Slavery; they hugged their Chains, and fled in the Pace of those Friends, who endeavoured to release them: Where, then, was our boafted Reason and Liberty? What Pretensions can we have to the Title of free Agents, if "we cannot " do the Good; we would, and must do the "Evil we would not:" Or, how inconfiftent was it with the Character of intelligent Beings, to have been to full of Prepoffession and Prejudice, that Almighty Power, with confummate Wildom, could not convey the plainest Truths into our Minds, without meeting with infinite Reluctance to rebe meek and lowly in our own Opinion; and, if we are Men, let us shew ourselves such, in our Readiness to embrace the Truth; and, if Christians, let us practife what we profess, and " fland fast in the Freedom. " with which the Son of God hath made "us free." wallante the is this la

A second Observation, to be made from the preceding Discourse, is, that the Christian Religion is not to be propagated, nor supported



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ported by Violence: Though our Seviour fays of Himfelf, " that He came not to fend "Peace," yet He did not fend His Apolhes or Ministers, to wage Was with Mankindy He afforce us, that " His Kingdom his " not of this World," and therefore "His " Servants are not to highter" " I ram " come to fend a Sword upon Barth," not to put it into your Hands, but to fuffer it to be taken up against you, and you must be patient under its you are not to perfe cute, but to be perfecuted in Your Adversasies will be armed, but you are to bear no Weapons, not even in your own Defence You may fee from, but not relift them; but rather " turn your Cheek to the Smiter;" Though you wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, yet your Contention and your Arms must be of a spinitual Nature: You must subdue these Enemies by the Power of Truth, extinguish their Enmity by Perfeverance, and overcome their Injuries by Forgiveness: For which End, you must put on " the Helmet of Salvation, and the " Breaft-plate, of Righteousness," and be girded with 4" the Sword of the Spirit alone, which is the Word of God an bearn ad Hence it is manifelt, that Christ came not

to

to put a Sword into the Hand of the Defenders of the Faith, but Meekness and Charity into their Heart; that the Spirit of his Religion is a Spirit of Love; and that a Difagreement of Sentiment should not be suffered to make any Discord in our Affection. Whoever, therefore, forces Men into the Church, or detains them by Violence, perverts his Religion from the accidental and innocent Means, into the necessary and criminal Cause of civil and domestic Strife.

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Another Observation to be made, is, that the Abuse of the best Things produces the worst Effects.

As the Knowledge of the Deity, or forming just Notions of His Perfections, is the highest Attainment of human Wisdom, and the Basis of all true Piety; so Ignorance, or a false Conception of His Divine Attributes, hath been the Cause of gross Corruptions: From this Source, Superstition and Enthusiasm sprang, the most dire Plagues that ever infested Mankind; and which have been productive of greater Evils than Irreligion or Athersm.

As the Christian Institution is the highest Advancement of Mankind, or the Exaltation of the Human to the Divine Nature; so the Perversion of it is our vile Degradation: The Weeds of Prejudice, Pride, Avarice,

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Ambition never ran more foul and rank, than when they grew in the fertile Soil of corrupt Christianity.

There is nothing so obstinate, or blind, as superstition Zeal; Faith may remove Mountains, but Omnipotence itself cannot shake the Prejudice of the religious Bigot, whose Mind is overspread with more than Egyptian Darkness.

An immoderate Valuation of Self in any Respect, is unbecoming frail Mortals; but spiritual Pride is intolerable; the first argues Folly, the latter Infanity of Mind: "Stand" by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou," hath ever been the Language of this fastidious Spirit, which claims the highest Place in the Favour of the Deity, plumes itself upon being His Elect, and condemns its Neighbours as Outcasts and Reprobates.

Hypocrify never appears more detestable than when it assumes a religious Mask: A celestial Form is most debased, by concealing an infernal Substance; and Satan himself is never more diabolical, than when he perfonates an Angel of Light: There is something horrid in the Character of a religious wicked Man; and the Sinner veiled with the Cloak of Sanctity, is worse than

here.

But, Religious Ambition is of all others the most aspiring; which exalts itself "above all that is called God, or that is wor-Cc "shipped;

"the Temple of God, thewing itself that it is God;" The most pregnant Imagination could not have conceived the Excesses, which the religious Lust of Rule hath run into: Who would have thought that it could have assumed the Keys of Heaven and Hell, and arrogated to itself greater Power than omnipotent; to turn Good into Evil, and Evil into Good; to destroy the Right of private Judgment; to become the Dictator of every Man's Faith, to reconcile Contradictions, and

perform Impolibilities?

Again, we may observe from what hath been faid, that if the Son of God and the Saviour of Mankind bath been treated as a Destroyer; If He, who merited high Esteem, met with vile Calumny; and who knew no Sin, hath been charged with black Crimes, and executed as an infamous Malefactor; what Exemption can we expect from the Calamities incident to us from the Folly and and Depravity of our Fellow-Creatures ? " If they have perfecuted Me, thaith Christ to " his Disciples,) they will also persecute you: If they have called the Master of " the House Beelzebub, how much more will they call them of his Houshold?" Innocence will free us from the Guilt of Sin,

DISCOURSE JX 403

Sin, but cannot secure us from the Imputation of it: A false Judgment may be passed upon us, either through Ignorance or Design: Some are blind to Merit, others are offended at it: The most worthy are the natural Subjects for the Envy and Malice of Detractors: Let us, then, consider, that however well we may deserve of Mankind, we may be treated as most undeserving; and that Vice is a Frenzy of the Mind, which renders the Patient insensible of his Disorder, averse to his Medicines, and desperate against his Physicians.

And, therefore, I infer in the last Place, that we ought to persevere in the Profession of our Faith, and the Discharge of our Duty, whomsoever we may offend, or whatever we may fuffer: Great Concessions are to be made for Peace-Sake, and especially by those who are of the Household of Peace: They ought to bear with the Prejudice and Perverseness of Mankind; and forgive Injuries to their Person, their Property, their Reputation; but they must not violate the least; Part of their Duty, break the Peace of their Mind or, bring a Sword there, to keep Peace with Mankind, or to ward off the Sword of their Perfecutors: They must not flatter -orf sit ni fill Crc.2 1st , is another

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another in his Vices, though it may be taken for Amity; nor defift from good Offices, though it may be mistaken for Enmity: Though our Saviour was the Prince of Peace, yet He fought to establish his Kingdom on the Foundation of Verity, Justice, and Honour, alone: If Integrity of Heart, Simplicity of Manners, and an unwearied Perseverance in doing Good. and reclaiming Mankind, gave Offence, He would not, nay, He could not help giving it: He was obliged to execute his Commission: If pleasing God was displeasing Men, then He came not to feek their Favour, but to incur their Displeasure. War I drought hah

Let us, then, follow the Example of our Lord and Mafter : If Goodness, Virtue, and Merit, excite the Envy, Rage, and Malice of others, let us not be less good, less virtuous, or less deserving, that others may be less envious, less passionate, or less malicious: But if fuch Things, instead of cooling, inflame Men's Temper, let us add Fuel to the Fire, and accumulate it on their Heads but let us take Care that we give no other Offence, than the conscientious Discharge of our Duty, " in fighting the good Fight " of Faith, and contending for an incorrup-" tible Crown:" And if this should provoke any to Anger, let us perfift in the Pro-" vocation.

DISCOURSE IX. 405

vocation, and glorify God, by trusting in His Divine Providence; and let us not seek any other Revenge on our Maligners, than by displaying the Light of Truth, and continuing, like the Sun of Righteousness, to shine on and dispel the Clouds of Darkness.

DISCOULSE IX. 205

vocation, and glossy Ced, by mything an His Divine Providence; and let us not reck any other Restricts on our Maigners which 1986 has report to should sat speed took we tituing, liter this hand of Rightsoni else to thing on and defeat the Clouds of Decision, and

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MATTHEW VILTE:

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All Things what soever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

PLAIN, practical, moral Precepts, which inculcate our Duty, and promote the Peace and Happiness of Mankind, are never unseasonable Topicks of Discourse: And there is no one which can contribute more to these Ends, than the above recited; which for that Reason, hath been distinguished with the honourable Appellation of the golden Rule of Life.

Without any farther Preface or Apology, therefore, I will treat of it in the following

Manner:

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First,

First, I shall enquire into the Nature and Extent of this Rule.

Secondly, lay before you the Uses and Advantages of it: And,

Lastly, exhort and recommend the Practice of it.

And, First, This Precept is built on two self-evident Principles of Equity: That all Things should be treated agreeably to their Nature; and, that Justice bath no Respect of

Persons.

The Universality of the first, renders this Precept applicable to Creatures of a different Species: Since it is manifest, that all naturally defire to be treated agreeably to their Nature, every one may learn from his own Defire, in what Manner he ought to treat others.

The fecond Principle feems to be confined to the Individuals of the fame Species, and intimates to us that all who participate of the same common Nature, are entitled to the fame general Confideration: Or, when all other Circumstances remain the same, mere personal Difference cannot make any Variation, and it matters not, who may be concerned; but what is just and fit for one Individual to do, or defire, is just and fit for another in the fame Situation.

The Words indeed are more general, and command us to do not only what is just and fit, but all things "whatsoever we "would, (or could wish,) that Men should do "unto us: But they must be understood in such a Sense, as is consistent with, or, founded upon the aforementioned Maxims.

To preserve, therefore, this Consistency and Dependence, they must be considered, either as a Precept of impartial Justice, or, as a Rule

for proving and correcting our Defires.

If they be confidered as a Precept of impartial Justice, the Words " whatsoever ye would " that Men should do unto you," must be taken in a circumscribed Sense, as the Desire of Reason; not of Will, or Passion: A Man may defire all the Riches in the World, and wish that his Neighbour would convey to him his whole Substance; yet it would be an extraordinary Injunction which obliged him, on Account of that Absurdity, to dispose of all his Possession, and give it to his Neighbour: This would be wrong, and impracticable; wrong, in flying from one Extreme to another, and impoverishing himself and Family; and impracticable, as the Excess of selfish Desires, would necessarily prevent such a social Extravagance: And, therefore, when these Words are defigned as a perfect Rule of Justice, they must

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must be understood in this limited Sense, "All Things, which ye think fit and rea" fonable to desire from others, these do ye " unto them."

But, this Precept may be considered as a commodious Rule for proving and rectifying our Defires; and then it may be taken in its semost Extent: As, for Example, " whatever " ye would that Men should do to you," confider, whether you be willing, or whether it be proper to do the same to others; or, try your Defire, by supposing it another's, and fee on that Footing, whether it be right in you to comply with it; and if upon this Scrutiny, you find it exorbitant, infer that the Defire, (whatever it may be,) is exceffive, and ought to be lowered; and repeat the Trial, till your Expectation, and Compliance, coincide: When you may fairly determine, that the Defire is modest and natural, and the proper Direction for your Behaviour to others. It avig Dea disting I sta

Or in other Words, bring your Defire, to the Balance of Justice, and weigh it with your inclination to gratify the same Defire in another: If your Defire preponderates, it is selfish and fordid; you incline too much on your own Side, and injure your Neighbour; take therefore from the one Scale, and add to the other;

till they are suspended in an Equilibrium then as you will defire no more than you are willing to give, your Self-Love, and focial Affection will be duly balanced.

These are the natural and obvious Constructions of these Words. and and and and A la

But is is necessary to observe farther upon this last Part, that there is a Transposition of ourselves in the Place of another, and of another in our Place, implied in it: 1007/ 1001

And as this Transposition is subject to some Restrictions, and should be made fometimes in an unlimited, and fometimes a partial manner, it will be necessary to explain and enlarge on it. the his selection of mutal

It is an universally true Proposition, and may be deduced from the first Principle of Justice. that what any Beings may reasonably defire from other Beings, of a different Kind, it would be just for them to do to those others, on a Supposition of a Change of Nature and Condition: But though this be univerfally true, yet not univerfally practicable; as we know but little of the Constitution of other Animals, and have imperfect Ideas of their Wants or Powers, we cannot completely transfer ourselves into their Place; In one or two particular Instances, indeed, where the Symptoms of their Wants and Feelings are fo manifeft Necessaries

fest, that we can easily imagine something analogous to them in our own; there the Idea of what we should feel, were we in their Condition, might direct us, in some Measure, how to act by them: But in general, no entire Rule of Action can be formed from this Kind of Transposition: The Change, therefore, of Persons, more properly belongs to the Human Species; and as it is appropriated to it in these Words, "whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you," I shall consider them as designed solely for promoting Justice and Equity among Mankins.

From the Participation then of one common Nature, we are either in the same Circumstances with our Brother, or may easily imagine ourselves in them; and hence render ourselves, competent Judges of Equity, in most Cases

which happen between us.

We are in the same Circumstances with our Brother, in all Things, common and present to us both, or, immediately flowing from the natural Parity of Mankind; which natural Equatity is very extensive, as we are all placed in the same Order of Beings; are alike, rational, sensitive Animals, and nearly resembling one another in our Understanding, Will, and Affections; Food, Raiment, and Habitation, with other Externals, are the common Necessaries

Necessaries of human Life; we are all subject to the same Terms of Mortality, and to the same Kind of Diseases and Instrmities; we are Fellow-Members of Society, having mutual Obligations, and reciprocal Dependencies; and lastly, our Interest consists in the same Things, and is to be attained by the same Courses:

From which Circumstances it follows, that all have the same Laws of Nature, and Rules of Conduct: In these Respects, therefore, where our Wants and Feelings are mutual and general, the Defire of the Individual is the Defire of the whole Species, and every Man is the true Representative of his Neighand the Epitome of Mankind: Here the Transposition of Persons alone is sufficient; and if we ask ourselves, what we expect from others the answer is general, and a full Recital of our Duty to them; or, if we inquire what we ought to do to them, we shall find an exact Detail of our Expectations from them, or their Duty to us: Thus in all Decisions of Property, and Cases where the Relations are equal or co-ordinate, as between Man and Man, between Fellow-Citizens, Neighbours, or Brethren, it is no Matter who are the Individuals; as there is no Difference of Circumstances, the Claims and Rules of Inquiry will be on each Side the fame; and

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and confequently the fame to us, whomfor

But, besides these general Circumstances which affect all, in the same Manner, or in which the Relative and Correlative are equally placed; there are also Circumstances, which though common to all, are not equally present to all, or which make one Individual differ from another at the same Time, or from himself at different Scasons.

The general Calamities incident to human Nature, do not come to all in the fame Degree, or at the fame Period; fome are vilited with Siekness, Poverty, and Adversity, while others enjoy Health, Plenty, and Prosperity : There are, likewife, fubordinate Relations and various Dependancies flowing from natural or political Institutions, from different Occupations, Ages, and unequal Divisions of Property: In which Divertity of Circumstances, there are various Rules of Conduct or Manners peculiar to each of them; and the Duties and Expectations are not the same in all : In Cases, therefore, where any of these unequal Circumstaneces or subordingte Relations are concerned, there must be Transpolition of Conditions, as well as of Perfons; and then what may appear just for us to do or defire upon the Confideration of both Sentry will be un early side the fame?

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these Changes, the same ought we to defire, or do in our present State: As, for Instance, whatever Treatment any Person, suppoling he was a Son or Servant, should think it reasonable to receive from his Father or Master. the same ought he to extend to his Son or Servant; and the Son should pay that Honour to his Father, and the Servant thew that Obedience to his Master, which he supposing, he was a Father or Mafter, should think himfelf entitled to heroconsine I brail and

And again, whatever Affiftance we should judge reasonable to expect, were we in Distress, from Persons in our present Circumstances, the same ought we to reach out to Persons in the like Diffress: And whatever Offices of Humanity, were we in affluent Circumstances, we should judge right to do to Persons in our present Afflictions, to such Acts we should confine our Expectations, from Persons in those Circumfrances II. Will a cold

Such are the Transpositions necessary to be made, for the due Observation of this Precept: The one is only a Change of Persons; the other a Change of Persons and Conditions: But in both, the Transpositions are natural, and the Inferences just : If we only change Persons, what was our Duty or our Expectaand Facility has Feliger Charges, and

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somether with the Condition of human

tions before, will remain the fame afterwards; or, if there be a Change of Persons and Conditions, it will be of fuch Conditions, as are common to Mankind, and in which we may probably have been; or, from the Identity of our Nature, and our Observations on our Fellow-Creatures, we are fo well acquainted with, that by imagining ourselves in them, we may acquire a competent Knowledge of the Duties arising from them. while a saw on

Thus have I endeavoured to explain the Nature and Extent of the Duty enjoined.

I shall now proceed to display the Uses and Advantages of it and at sport and dans

And the first Advantage is, that it is a comprehensive Rule of Action, containing the whole Duty of Man to his Neighbour, and extending to every Occurrence in focial Life. All the Commandments in the fecond Table are comprized in this Injunction, " Thou shalt " love thy Neighbour as thyfelf," or thou shalt consider him as another Self, and do to him as thou wouldst be done unto it is about

Secondly, this Precept is adapted, to every Capacity; every one knows what his Expectations are from Mankind, and thence can readily inform himself what Mankind expects from him: And as he is conscious of his natural Parity with his Fellow-Creatures, and conversant with the Conditions of human

Life,

Life, he cannot but be fensible that he " should do to others, as he would they " should do to him: The Justice of this Rule is obvious to the meanest Understanding; it is acknowledged by all; it is felt by all; accompanied with a Sense of Duty, and a Consciousness of an Obligation, arising as it were by Instinct, or, as the Impulse of Providence, quickening us to the Observance of it: Alk an illiterate Person whether he " should not do to others as he would be done unto," and he will not helitate a Moment, but acknowledge the Truth, and feel himself bound to conform to it: The selfish and fordid Wretch, induced by some lucrative View to act against this Rule, is so conscious of its Rectitude and universal Approbation, that he dares not avow his own Practices. but stands convicted of Iniquity in his Mind: There cannot, be a clearer Demonstration of the Importance of this Divine Precept, than the Preparation, which our all-just Creator hath thought fit to make for the Practice of it, by inspiring every Breast with an intuitive Knowledge of it, and placing fuch a strong Bias to attract us towards it, that we must offer Violence to our Judgment and Conscience before we can divert ourselves from it. 19545 in a sale to

Hence, another Advantage of this Rule is that it is always at hand; we bear it, imprint-

ed in our Breaft, or, engraven in fuch capital Characters, that " he who runs may read them:" What Moses said of the Commandments which he gave the Children of Ifrael, may be applied to this: " It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: It is not " in Heaven, that thou fhouldst fay, who shall " go up for us to Heaven, and bring it " unto us, that we may hear it and do it? " Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou " shouldst say, who shall go over the Sea for " us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear " it and do it? But the Word is very nigh " unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart,

" that thou mayft do it."

And moreover, it is a Rule, in every Man's Power to practife: It is easy for any one to know what he wills from another; and there is no Difficulty, in making himself as willing to do the same to another; a ready Mind is all required ; and who can thinder us of it? Every Man may be as honest and as just as he pleases; here her his Strength; he is subject to he Compulsion or Restraint from without, and where Nature operates freely, disposed towards it from within, and nothing but inordinate Passions or Lusts can divest him of this Liberty. Fence, noother Advantage of this United

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Cale, was keependy has beens Score through HE next Advantage of this Rule is. that it is in an effectal Manner calculated for the Supprellion of the Prejudices and Partialities which Self-Interest raifes within us : It is a general Rule in all Courts of Equity, that no Man should sit as a Judge in his own Cause, or be admitted as an Evidence where he is a Party concerned, and the Reafon is, because Self-Love, the leading Principle in human Nature, frequently makes Men partial to themselves : Though there is an inteperable Connection between Justice and true Interest, and when we follow the one, we pursue the other; yet there is an apparent and falle, as well as a real and true Interest; or we may err in our Judgment, and take the Appearance for the Reality; and when we err in this Manner, Duty and apparent Interest will counteract one another, the Idea of Interest will cast a Mift Dd 2 them

Mist over the Understanding; and though the Understanding may be strong enough to differn Truth through it, yet Interest may the Will, and prejudice the influence Mind against it: Were we but rarely to make a false Judgment of Interest, or was this wrong Judgment feldom to interfere with our Duty, its Prevalence would be less injurious: But the contrary in either Case, too frequently happens: Some through Ignorance or Inadvertency are imposed upon by the specious Appearance of Things, and through an Error of the Understanding make a false Judgment of Interest, while many suffer their Passions to make this Judgment for them; and where Avarice, Ambition and Pride preside, Men will be partial to themselves: where Envy, Revenge and Malice prevail, they will be prejudiced against others: Hence it comes to pass, that few are capable of judging right in their own Cause: The great Use, of this Precept, therefore, is to remove these Obstacles; and by diverting the Passions, and informing the Understanding, to qualify us to act as Arbitrators between our Neighbour and ourselves; for which Purpose, it abstracts us as it were out of ourselves, or divorces Reason from Passion; and by making us consider our Defires or Actions as another's, (Interest and Paffion, being thus detached from us,) we view 2 6 On 1 .. them

them with Indifference, and judge of them as impartially, as if they were another and

Though Self-Interest is too energetick to be refifted when we are actually attracted by it g yet on the other Hand, when dits Bias is removed, and we are once actuated by the Principle of Juffice, we cannot be eafily dia verted from our Course: But by the Application of this Rule, this Bias is removed; all. Thoughts of Interest are excluded; Justice engroffes the Attention; a strong Sense of it with deep Impressions is excited, by which Anticipation or prior Policition we become Superiour to the Powers of Interest or Passion

There is a remarkable Inflance of this Supeperiority recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of Ifrael which, as an Illustration of the Use of this Rule, and a Confirmation of its Powers, demands your Artention noupelino?

Nathan the Prophet laid before David his Brother, a Cafe of iniquitous Opproffion, in the Parable of the rich Man's feizing the poor Man's Lamb : The King was for affected at the Story, and moved with such Indignation at the Oppressor, that he protested, mas the Lord liv-"eth, the Man who hath done this Thing shall furely die:" Here he had not the leaft fuspicion of any Delign upon himself; but a foon as the Senie of this unparalled Violence had raised a determined Resolution of punishlikewife;"

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ing the Offender, the Prophet applies the Parable, and charges bim with having been the Oppressor David confounded at this unexperfed Attack, this ruling Passions having been Supplanted, his Mind left open, and Justice suffered to pour its whole Force into it, and to take fuch supple Possession, that it could not be dislodged,) was to stricken with the Con-Sciousness of Guilt, and the Equity of his Sentence, that he had no Power to Suppress the one nor Confidence to certact the other Had the Prophet openly and directly acquied him with the harrid Crimes of Murder and Adultery, his Pride and Partiality would have spurged at the Charge, and inflamed him against the Accuser to But by this innocent Strategon, he was drawn into a Reflection of his Grimes, and a Condennation of birifelf; the Consequence of which was a smorre and bearty Repentance evoled that telephone samurages.

Humanity was enforced upon the Lawyet, when our Saviour asked him, "who was fineighbour to him that fell among Thieves?" "And his answered, he that shewed "Mercy to him?" With this Preparation, our Saviour airged the Example of the good Samaritan with great Advantage, and could not fail of making a deep Impref-sin, when he added, "go and do thou likewife;"

likewise:" The Lawyer could not but perceive, that there was no other Relation between the Samaritan and the Stranger, than between himfelf and another afflicted Perfon; that the Samaritan only testified a humane Heart towards one who bore a human Form, and did no more than what he himself and every Man would defire to be done unto, and ought to do to all, in the fame Situation. 1180

These are strong Proofs of the Influence of Justice on an unbiasted Mind; and through the Application of this Rule, we treat ourselves much in the same Manner: By abstracting ourselves from our Actions, and viewing them, as if they were another's, and appealing to ourselves as to indifferent Persons, we shall divert our Partiality and Prejudice, and (our Sense of Duty and Equity being perfectly unembarrafied,) make a fair fudgment; and when we apply it to ourselves, the Passions not being able to recover themselves, Justice will retain its Seat, and oblige us to stand by its Determinations.

But lastly, The Weight of Prejudices and Partialities which hang like a Mill-stone about our Necks, is not only removed, and the Judgment relieved from this grievous Yoke, by the Means of this Precept; but in most Cases there is more done by it: It excites the benevolent Affections; makes us fympathize another's

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with our Neighbour; and by our personating him, and placing ourselves in his Circumstances, Self-Love becomes his Advocate, and pleads his Caufe, by urging us to the Discharge of our Duty to him, and the Abatement of our Demand from him. w one absence track

But the Power of this Rule will be best exemplified by a special Application of it, to some particular Circumstances in which we may be

placed, with respect to one another.

As first. When my Neighbour is violently enraged, and threatens me with some Injury, let me suppose myself the irritated Person; and on this Change inquire, whether I have not been ill treated? Hath not my Character been aspersed, and some false and scandalous Stories raised to my Prejudice? My Person attacked or my Property injured? Do not I do well, to be angry? Doth not Prudence prescribe Resentment, and Self-Desence urge a Retaliation for the Prevention of a future will retning its Sext, and oblige as the fillen

Upon this Scrutiny into my Conduct, when fet at a Distance from me, and supposed to be another's, I shall probably find that I have given Provocation, and Ground of Offence: And instead of repeating the Affront, and heaping Coal upon the Fire, I shall be led into a Sense and Acknowledgment of my Misbehaviour; endeavour to extinguish chiw

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another's Enflity, and recover his Favour, by approper Submission and ready Display of future good Offices I I Insulannu as assist and

Or at least, this Transposition will have the good Effect, of putting me to search narrowly into my own Behaviour, preventing me from catching the Flame of another's Anger, cooling my Resentment, and contributing in some Degree towards my doing to my Adversary, no more than what I should think right to be done to myselfion

or Or, When I am going to be the Aggressor, and my Hand is listed up against my Neighbour, let me suspend the Stroke, change Places with him, and consider myself as going to be assaulted by him; and contider myself as going to be assaulted by him; and conthis Idea, let me ask, What Reason can he have for such violent Measures? Have I offended him? If but once, surely that cannot deserve such as severe Return; if often, would it not be better to repeat his Forgiveness, and try all fair Means, before he proceeds to Extremities? Resistance will shaden, but Forbearance dissolve me; and I cannot long continue at Variance with him, who is determined not to be at Entmity with means.

Provocation given let me alk myself, How I should like to have such a Person for my neighbour, who without any Cause in Contradiction

Contradiction both with his Duty and his Interest, will not live at Peace with me, but takes an unnatural Pleasure in wreaking his Ill-Nature, and Malice upon me? If I am injured in my Person, my Fortune, or my Character, am I not touched in a sensible Part? Doth it not incite my keen Resentment, and turn me from a Friend to an Enemy?

munity, are not Offences against me Breaches of civil Justice? Are not private Wrongs publicle Injuries? And, do not I think the Authors of them the Pests of Society, and Violators of the Laws of God and Man?

Mor can the Difference of Persons vary the Case: Are not my Neighbour's Fortune, his Person, his Character, as dear to him as mine can be to me? Hath he not the same tender Feelings? The same Sentiment of Resentment? Do I not violate the same Laws of Justice? And is not the Peace of Society as much endangered by my Contentions as my Neighbour's? And am I onot as much obnoxious to the same human and divine Penaltics?

as thefe, cannot fail of differenting my Ill-Will against my Neighbour, and raising in me a just Sonse of my Obligations to Peace and Amity.

at But thirdly, when my Necessities or Dis-

treffes provoke my Expectations, and make me importunate for Affiftance from my Neighbour; let me suppose myself in his Circumstances; assume his Character, and enter into his Part, as if it were my own: Let me consider, upon this Change, what Abilities I posses? What Relation I bear? Have I not nearer Friends, and more necessitous Dependents, who may have a prior Claim to my Service? And would it not be depriving them of my Charity to bestow it upon another?

By these and such like Inquiries, we shall confront our Desires; and by informing our-felves what is reasonable in your Neighbour to give, we shall learn what is proper for us to expect, and judge candidly of him.

And lastly. When my Brother labours under any grievous Affliction, or Distress, let me set the Glass before me, and behold myself struggling with the same Calamity: How plainly do I, then, perceive the Duty of Humanity, and my Right to the Affistance of my Fellow-Creatures! How strongly are these Obligations imprinted upon my Mind? Do I not wonder how any one can be so insensible of my Miseries as to pass by me unconcerned? How grateful is any friendly Relief? How do I bless the Hand which

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gives it? And with warm Gratitude adore

But is not my Brother the fame miferable Spectacle with myfelf i Do not I fee him agonizing under Pain, and languishing in the fame helples Manner? Are not his Calls for Affiftance as loud, and his Title to it as good as mine? Would not the Balm poured into his Wounds affuage his Pain as well as mine? And would not Relief come as feafonably, and meet with the fame cordial Reception? And lastly, Do I not see the Heart of the fuccoured, like my own, dancing for Joy, and the Bleffing of him who was ready to periff poured forth as fervently on his Deliverer?

Hence, by drawing a Picture of our Brother from ourselves and ourselves from our Brother, viewing them in the fame Light, and comparing them together, we shall learn to forgive an Enemy; forbear from Injuries; moderate our Expectations in Diffrelles; and com-

milerate the Afflicted and J ob this wolf

Thus have I attempted to fet before you fome of the general Uses to be made of this divine Precept, and the Advantages arising from the Application of it. whom you I off

It only remains, therefore, in the last Place, to exhort and recommend the Practice of its but I have anticipated this Part of my Difcourse: The Explication and Display of its Ules

Uses and Advantages, render every other

Recommendation unnecessary.

What more, powerful Motives can be urged for the Practice of it, than its being founded upon the first Principles of Equity and Truth; that it is level to all Capacities; that we cannot be deceived by it; that we are confident we are in the right when we act-by it; that our Reason affents, our Conscience urges us to it, and it hath the Seal of universal Approbation? What Excuse then can we have

for not practifing it?

We cannot plead Ignorance: Common Sense suggests, and the World appeals to, and reminds us of it: When we see others do wrong, and especially to ourselves, do we not immediately fly to this Rule? Do we not prescribe the Application of it, as effectual Means to convince them of their Iniquity? Do we not bid them reflect how they would be done unto, and whether their Treatment of us, is such as they would expect from us? And, if we are so ready to dictate it to others, why are we not as forward to recommend it to ourselves? If we are sensible that it is the best Means for curbing our Neighbour's Extravagance, why do we not know that it will be as useful in checking our own?

We cannot plead Inability? We know what we desire from others; and there is no Difficulty than to regulate our Practice by it?

But there is no Topick, by which this Rule can be urged with greater Advantage, than that of its removing the Prejudices and Partialities which a falle Judgement of Interest or inordinate Passion creates; and converting Self-Love into an Advocate for our Neighbour! There cannot be a stronger Proof of the Weakness and Depravity of human Nature, than the Prepofierfions which blind the Understanding, and bias the Will, in the plain Points of Justice and Duty: How frequently are Men imposed upon by the Appearance of Interest, and how powerful is its Influence upon us? Daily Experience and Observation display too many Examples of it: Now the best, and perhaps the only effectual Prevention of this Influence, is the Application of this Rule: A quick Sense of Justice, and a strong Consciousness of Duty, are the Arms with which Providence hath arrayed us, to defend ourselves against the formidable Adversaries, falle

falfe Interest and Passion: It is incumbent upon us; therefore, to be convertant, with them, to have them always at hand, and lie under them; that when we are attacked by these Enemies. we may not be off our Guard, or inxperet in the Use of them: Though no Man will dispute the Equity of this Precept, yet, when our Attention is engroffed by the Passions or Views of Interest, we shall not immediately recollect it; we should, therefore, do by it as the Ifraelites did by their Law, meditate upon it when we lie down, and when we rife up; make it the daily Subject of our Converlation; wear it about our Nocks, and continually tenew the Characters of it upon our Hearts. that it may be prevalent in our Thoughts, and occur on every Emergency.

This Substitution of ourselves in the Place of our Neighbour, or personating his Character, is of fuch general Use, that St. Paul thought fit to recommend it even to those whom we may reasonably presume to have been least influenced by Passion, and in Things where Self-Interest was least concerned: " Brethren. " fays he to the Galatians, I if a Man be " overtaken in Fault, ye that are spiritual " restore such a one in the Spirit of Meek-" ness; considering thyself lest thou also " be tempted:" He charged them to furvey themselves, reflect upon their own Frailities,

and make the fame Allowance for another's, as their own: And, to let him fling the first Stone at his offending Brother, who, upon a thorough Examination, stands acquitted, of all Offence in his own Conscience. But to conclude: Since this Precent hath all the Signs of being a Law of Nature, as established on the first Principles of Equity, deeply imprinted upon the buman Mind, and adapted to all Capacities and Powers: Since it is a Doctrine of Revelation, contained in the Law and the Prophets, and enjoined in the Golpel: If then as Men you have any Love for Justice, or any Regard for your Duty to your Creator; or, if as Christians you hold yourselves bound by a Law which our Saviour came to fulfil, and which He hath expressly commanded and enforced, you will make it your principal Care, " to do to all Men as you would they flould do to you." I land to the

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